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Security Council
Fifty-second Year

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Wednesday, 16 April 1997, 11.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Monteiro	(Portugal)
Members:	Chile	Mr. Somavía
	China	Mr. Wang Xuexian
	Costa Rica	Mr. Sáenz Biolley
	Egypt	Mr. Aboul-Magd
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Cabral
	Japan	Mr. Owada
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Poland	Mr. Matuszewski
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Choi
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Sweden	Mr. Osvald
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston
	United States of America	Mr. Richardson

Agenda

The situation in Angola

Progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) (S/1997/304)

97-85395 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Angola

Progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) (S/1997/304)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Cameroon, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Peru, Qatar, South Africa, Uruguay and Zimbabwe, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Van Dunem "Mbinda" (Angola) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Aouad (Argentina), Mr. Amorim (Brazil), Mr. Mpay (Cameroon), Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho), Mr. Chimimba (Malawi), Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique), Mr. Biegman (Netherlands), Mr. Guillén (Peru), Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar), Mr. Jele (South Africa), Mr. Benítez Sáenz (Uruguay) and Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III), document S/1997/304. Members of the Council also have before them document S/1997/316, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

The first speaker is the representative of Angola, on whom I now call.

Mr. Van Dunem "Mbinda" (Angola): I would like to begin, Sir, by congratulating you on behalf of the Government of Angola, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. Your diplomatic skills are a guarantee that you will ably guide the work of this body. I also congratulate the outgoing President, His Excellency Ambassador Zbigniew Wlosowicz, for the excellent work he performed during his mandate last month.

I would like also to express our appreciation for the efforts made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for peace in Angola. His recent visit was a testimony of his commitment to the rapid settlement of the Angolan conflict, and contributed a great deal to speeding up the peace process.

We acknowledge as well the performance of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Maître Alioune Blondin Beye, and that of the member countries of the troika of observers of the Angolan peace process: Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States.

Just a few days ago, this Council and the international community witnessed an important turning point in the history of Angola: the inauguration of the Government of National Unity and Reconciliation, and the return of UNITA members to Parliament finally occurred, allowing for the first time the beginnings of the normal operation of the democratic institutions that were put in place after the general elections of 1992.

On behalf of the people and the Government of Angola, we would like to reiterate our thanks for the presence and solidarity of the Heads of State or Government of Portugal, Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa, Malawi, Mali, Gabon, Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Namibia, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau; the Vice-President of Ghana; the Prime Minister of Mozambique; the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and representatives of the European Union and other Governments for being at the swearing-in ceremony of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation.

These two important events can be viewed as an indicator of the political stability in our country, and of the fact that the Angolans, who in the past fought one another with weapons because of their political

differences, now find themselves on the same side, fighting for the higher interests of their country and of the whole Angolan people.

We acknowledge that the inauguration of the Government and the Parliament took place at a time when there are important tasks still to be accomplished, but as Prime Minister França Van Dunem stated,

> "we wanted to instill more confidence in the peace process with that gesture".

The premises are thus established for us to attain our main objective, which is the establishment of the true rule of law, under which the individual and collective rights of all citizens will be respected and protected by law, and under which the political differences and the different parties can find in the Parliament an appropriate forum for discussions and review.

The actual beginning of the mandate of the new Government and the new Parliament, an event cheered by our people, by the national political forces and by the international community, is one of a series of significant steps already concluded under the peace process for Angola. That makes us assert that war is becoming a matter of the past, while peace and stability are a day-to-day reality.

The road that took us to that goal was a long and difficult one. It demanded tremendous dedication, numerous sacrifices and a high spirit of flexibility. The relative peace that Angola has experienced for approximately three years is the fruit of that effort, and it constitutes the most precious thing that the people are enjoying after two decades of violence and destruction.

It is also important, however, to underscore that the inauguration of the new Government and the establishment of the new Parliament do not mean that the peace process in Angola has entirely reached its objectives, and certainly do not signal its end.

There is still a lot to be done before we achieve effective peace and stability country-wide. The priorities are the extension of State administration throughout the country, which will ensure free movement of people and goods; the return of refugees and displaced persons to their places of origin; and the re-establishment of normal social and economic activity in those areas.

The conclusion of the formation of the Angolan Armed Forces and the social reintegration of former combatants is another fundamental issue to be tackled during this current stage. We are confident that these and other clauses of the Lusaka Protocol will be implemented very shortly.

Angola is now entering a new era of its history, one that will bring an end to the almost three decades of war that have ravaged the country. The burden caused by the war is very heavy, and given the current economic and financial situation, the Angolan Government alone will not be able to mitigate its negative impact. We therefore appeal to the international community to continue to render its valuable support.

In this context, the Angolan Government recalls that it is time to speed up implementation of the programme of community rehabilitation and national reconciliation, adopted during the Brussels Round Table Conference, where the international community pledged almost $1 billion for the programme.

In the same vein, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for launching a consolidated inter-agency appeal in the amount of $228.4 million, whose goal is to meet the most pressing humanitarian needs of the Angolan population.

The draft resolution before the Council today contains important requirements for the completion of the Angolan peace process. The pertinent recommendations in paragraph 9 of the Secretary-General's report (S/1997/304), regarding the phased and gradual withdrawal of the contingent of UNAVEM III, as well as those in operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, are proof of the sincerity and responsibility with which the Angolan peace process has proceeded. The vigilance therein reflects the situation on the ground, which leads us to advance step by step towards the consolidation of the peace process to which the United Nations as a whole and the Security Council in particular have contributed, for the sake of peace in southern Africa and in the world.

The future of Angola is now in the hands of Angolans, and we believe we will be able to demonstrate that all the statements made on 9 and 11 April 1997 were not just empty words. The courage, tenacity and spirit of sacrifice with which we have always faced adversity in the past will now enable us to move ahead towards a new Angola and will bear the fruits of peace and prosperity for all Angolans.

What I am going to say now is equally important. Angola, which is in southern Africa, fought a bloody war against South Africa for several years after its war of independence from colonialism. After apartheid, Angola entered its civil war, and today Angola is already experiencing a trend of peace. This is very important because Angola can now join the whole of southern Africa in an atmosphere of peace, stability and development.

We would like to thank, in this regard, all the Governments, United Nations humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations for their generosity towards the population affected by the war and to pay tribute to those who have sacrificed their lives in the service of peace in Angola.

Finally, we would like to stress that it is no longer the time, in this Council, to use language such as "both sides" or "both parties", as we did before, because today we have already sworn in a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation. Operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution before the Security Council, which reflects this idea, must be clarified, naming those who are to blame and not left as it is to give its current confusing idea.

The President: I thank the representative of Angola for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian Federation is profoundly gratified at the fact that Angola is moving step by step towards a new, peaceful stage in its national life. A considerable political, material and financial contribution to promoting national reconciliation in that country was and continues to be made by the international community.

Just two weeks ago it appeared that the peace process, encountering new difficulties, had once again been stalemated. However, the firm position of the international community, the resolutions of the Security Council, the visit of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to Angola and the intensive work carried out by his Special Representative made it possible to get things moving again.

After lengthy and completely unwarranted procrastination, UNITA finally did what was expected of it under the Lusaka Protocol. As a result, important and positive changes took place. The question of the status of Mr. Savimbi was resolved, the deputies from UNITA were sworn into the National Assembly and, most importantly, the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation was formed. Thus, a new political basis has been provided for the dialogue between the Government and UNITA, and the peace process has ascended to a new level. We hope that this will help the parties in Angola rise above any possible recurrence of their past mistrust and to make further progress towards durable peace in that country.

At the same time, we cannot fail to be concerned about the situation relating to completing the implementation of the political and particularly the military aspects of the Lusaka Protocol. Although there has been a certain amount of movement, the incorporation of selected troops into the Angolan Armed Forces and the National Police is going quite slowly. Instances of desertion among former UNITA soldiers number in the hundreds, and the checkpoints are only slowly being dismantled.

The failure to resolve military issues might in the future serve as a source of new difficulties and destabilization. It is precisely for that reason that we attach particular importance to the appeal contained in the draft resolution before the Council to fulfil the remaining aspects of the peace process precisely and promptly. We believe that promoting their implementation will continue to be the most important part of the mandate of UNAVEM III. As military and political questions are tackled, and as the military contingent of the Verification Mission is withdrawn, it will be possible to undertake transitional measures in order to ensure a further United Nations presence in Angola beyond 30 June 1997.

We would like to pay tribute to the people of Angola for their patience and persistence and their resolve to achieve peace and concord in their land. We appreciate that in order to consolidate the process of national reconciliation, further international assistance will be required. On the whole, we can support the proposals of the Secretary-General in this regard, and we will be prepared, in the context of the competencies of the Security Council, to consider any specific recommendations he may present later.

As a member of the troika of observer countries monitoring the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, the Russian Federation will continue its efforts, both multilaterally and bilaterally with all interested parties, to bring the process of national reconciliation to a successful conclusion, and to restore stability in Angola.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to offer a warm welcome to the Ambassador of Angola and other members of the Permanent Mission of Angola.

The Angolan Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, which the Angolan people and the international community have longed to see, has finally been established. This is yet another important milestone in the Angolan peace process. China rejoices heartily at this development and wishes to extend its warm congratulations to the Angolan people and both parties in Angola. We appreciate and welcome the political sincerity and positive attitude the parties concerned have demonstrated towards peace in Angola, in conformity with the popular will.

China has stated on many occasions that the settlement of the question of Angola ultimately rests with the Angolan people themselves. We feel gratified that the two parties in Angola have, through their efforts, achieved another major goal set by the Lusaka Protocol. We hope that the two parties will continue to accomplish other tasks in the peace process so that the Angolan people will again be able to enjoy peace and tranquillity and the country will be able to embark on the road of rehabilitation and development at an early date.

China has consistently held that the international community has the responsibility to promote the Angolan peace process and help bring peace to Angola. At this final critical juncture of the peace process, it is still necessary for the international community, including the United Nations, to give further support. On the basis of this consideration, the Chinese delegation supports the extension of the mandate of United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) to 30 June 1997 and will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us.

At the same time, we support further adjustments to UNAVEM III in the light of the gradual development of the situation in Angola and sincerely hope that the two parties in Angola will continue to cooperate with UNAVEM III to fully implement the Lusaka Protocol with a view to bringing peace to Angola.

An Angola of reconciliation is finally presented to the world 30 months after the signing of the Lusaka Protocol. This is another example of African countries, following Sierra Leone and Liberia, successfully resolving conflicts and achieving national reconciliation through political negotiations. We feel truly delighted that all of southern Africa has become a land of peace and harmony, that hot spots have been removed one after another from the African continent and that more and more African countries are moving towards peace and development. We would like to take this opportunity to extend our warm congratulations and pay high tribute to the African people.

A new page has now been turned in the history of Angola and a new era of economic recovery and national reconstruction has arrived. After many years of war, Angola has to tackle mountains of tasks in every field. The Angolan Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is faced with the dual mission of consolidating peace and reviving the economy. The road is long, and the task is arduous. The international community, including the United Nations, should assist Angola in every possible way to achieve rapid rehabilitation and development. This is also the fundamental guarantee for lasting peace in Angola. The Chinese Government and people are ready to make their contribution to this end.

Mr. Owada (Japan): The Government of Japan heartily welcomes the establishment of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Angola. Signifying as it does the introduction of a multi-party democracy, the establishment of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation demonstrates that Angola is falling into step with the ongoing democratization process that we have been witnessing in many parts of Africa, and that achievement is thus all the more welcome.

It is hoped that the parties concerned duly appreciate the unflagging commitment and close involvement of the international community in the peace process, especially in its deployment of three United Nations Missions, starting with the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) and continuing up to the present with UNAVEM III. The parties thus owe it to the international community, as well as to the people of Angola, to strive in good faith to solidify the progress that has been made so far and to reaffirm their commitment to nation-building. If they are to be able to carry out the difficult tasks that lie ahead, including the normalization of the State administration throughout the national territory and the integration of UNITA forces into the Angolan Armed Forces and the National Police, they will need to develop relations of mutual trust. As a first step in that process, my delegation earnestly hopes that President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi will find it possible to meet in Angola in the near future to consolidate the basis for genuine national reconciliation.

Under these circumstances, I wish to state that my delegation is in favour of the extension of the mandate of UNAVEM III until 30 June 1997, as prescribed in the draft resolution before us.

There is general support for a continued United Nations presence after UNAVEM III has completed its tasks. In its intervention on 27 February, my delegation confirmed the readiness of the Government of Japan to contribute to the follow-on Mission, the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola, once the details regarding its mandate, modalities, and time-frame are worked out. Now that the impasse in the political situation has been overcome, Japan is ready to consider how it might best contribute to that effort on the basis of the further recommendations of the Secretary-General and in accordance with actions taken by the Security Council.

Moreover, my Government is ready to assist Angola in its endeavour to reach true peace and national reconciliation. The consolidated appeal that was issued on 24 March contains humanitarian projects, as well as those aimed at consolidating the peace, and Japan is studying the appeal closely in order to determine how it might most appropriately contribute to it.

When the peace process is firmly on track and it is time to convene an international conference to consider the most effective ways and means of assisting Angola in developing its great potential in terms of both natural resources and human resources and in rebuilding its economy, Japan will be ready to participate actively in that conference.

In closing, I should like to express my sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Maître Alioune Blondin Beye, for their tireless efforts in support of the peace process in Angola. In order to ensure that those efforts are as fruitful as possible, we hope that all concerned will cooperate towards the consolidation of reconciliation throughout the country so that the process of nation-building can get under way. The people of Angola will then have reason to believe that a truly peaceful and prosperous future awaits them.

Mr. Choi (Republic of Korea): Five days ago, on 11 April 1997, the people of Angola put behind them two decades of tragic civil war and ushered in a new era of peace and concord. More than anything else, the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is a historic triumph for the Angolan people. It is a triumph of their long-standing aspirations for peace over the lingering forces of hatred and antagonism. The Republic of Korea extends its warmest congratulations to the people and the leaders of Angola on their achievement. We wish the very best for the people of Angola and for the new Government as it moves forward on the road to healing the scars of war and rebuilding the nation. The Republic of Korea will do its best within its capabilities to assist the Angolan Government in the daunting task ahead.

The inauguration of the unified Government in Angola is also a triumph for the international community, and for the United Nations in particular, which has invested a significant amount of its scarce resources in the largest United Nations peacekeeping operation in the world. Truly, Angola will go down as another instructive model of success in the annals of United Nations peacekeeping operations. We commend the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Maître Beye, as well as all the men and women of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) for their dedication and sacrifice.

We also pay tribute to the troika of observer countries, Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States, for the vital role they have been playing in facilitating the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. The Republic of Korea is proud of having taken part in the peace effort through its contribution of an engineering unit to UNAVEM III.

As we welcome the dawn of a promising new stage in the long and arduous peace process in Angola, we must not forget that there are still unfinished political and military tasks. We trust that the commitment of the Angolan people and their leaders to peace and reconciliation is strong enough to overcome the last few remaining obstacles in the peace process. We therefore look forward to speedy progress in the normalization of State administration throughout the country, the completion of the formation of the unified armed forces and the national police and the demobilization of ex-combatants. We believe that the continued presence of the United Nations in Angola is necessary until the hard-won peace takes firm root through the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. For this reason, we will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Council.

As President Dos Santos stated in his inaugural address, the future of Angola now lies in the hands of the Angolan people. There is a time for all things, and now

is the time for peace, the time for concord in Angola. We sincerely hope that the energies and resources of the Angolan people, which were once squandered on the battlefield, will from now on be devoted to the reconstruction of their war-torn country. In the same vein, we look forward to seeing the Angolan leaders devote their energies and wisdom to winning the new battle to build a new country from the ashes of war, make it more prosperous, and ensure that the people enjoy the dividends of peace. This is a new test facing Angola's leaders, and history will judge them on how well they fare at this test.

Sir John Weston (United Kingdom): We welcome the inauguration on 11 April of the Angolan Government of Unity and National Reconciliation. This was a major step forward for the people of Angola. We would like to congratulate them on their determination to complete this essential stage of the peace process.

We would like also to pay tribute to the work of Special Representative Maître Beye and to the Secretary-General, whose visit in March did much to help convince the parties of the Security Council's resolve on this issue. We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that Angola is closer than ever before to a final settlement. The key now is to ensure that this forward momentum is maintained. Delays have characterized the Angolan peace process for far too long. Let us hope that they are now consigned to the history books.

The new Government deserves our full support. These initial weeks and months are likely to be testing. Former adversaries have to learn to work together. A new team must get to grips with the responsibilities of government. UNITA has made the right decision in joining the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation. We trust they will now play a full and constructive part at all levels of the new Government and in the wider process of national reconciliation. We continue to believe that a meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi would be a welcome and visible signal of both leaders' commitment to making the new Government work for the benefit of all Angolans.

In the immediate future, there are important political and military tasks which must be completed. They are spelled out in the Secretary-General's report (S/1997/304). We agree that programmes to incorporate UNITA personnel into the Angolan army and the national police or to demobilize them should be accelerated. Getting State administration in place throughout the country is also a priority, and it is also important that the people of Angola can move around their country freely and that the exchange of goods is not impeded. We hope that rapid progress will be made on all of these outstanding issues and that they are not allowed to become new obstacles to the peace process.

One obstacle to further progress on the free movement of people and goods in Angola is the enormous number of mines which have been laid during the conflict. We hope that the reported delays in the mine-clearance programme will be resolved soon. In the meantime, we agree with the Secretary-General's recommendation that, as an interim measure, the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) should continue to provide operational support to the mine-clearance programme, on a cost-reimbursable basis from the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, until the end of June.

The Secretary-General refers to reports of Angolan involvement in the conflict in Zaire. We share his serious concern at these reports. The people of Angola know all too well the price of armed conflict. They must refrain from any action which would exacerbate conflict in Zaire.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the international community must remain engaged in Angola until the goal of full implementation of the peace agreements is reached. We support his recommendation to extend the mandate of UNAVEM III to 30 June 1997, and to deploy a United Nations observer mission in Angola thereafter. It is essential that the mandate of the observer mission is strong enough to enable it to be effective. We attach particular importance to the human rights element of it and to the mission having powers to investigate alleged abuses, as well as to the civilian police and public information programmes.

Finally, to those who would question the value of the United Nations and the resources devoted to it, the work of UNAVEM III, the largest current United Nations peacekeeping operation, is a reminder of the critical role which the United Nations can and does play in bringing conflicts to a peaceful resolution. But to be able to continue to do this effectively we need both the resources and the ability to take timely decisions which will be followed by prompt action when required.

Mr. Matuszewski (Poland): Allow me to begin by expressing my delegation's full support for the statement to be made at a later stage of this debate by the representative of the Netherlands on behalf of the European Union.

The Security Council is holding today its third meeting in the last two months to consider the question of Angola. This fact reflects not only the importance of the situation in that country, but also the commitment of the international community with regard to the peace process in Angola.

Recent developments, namely the adoption of legislation concerning a special status for the leader of UNITA, the incorporation of UNITA deputies into Parliament and, finally, the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, are significant steps towards peace and national reconciliation in Angola. We wish to congratulate the people of Angola, the parties concerned and their leaders for these crucial achievements.

However, many important tasks remain unfulfilled. We believe that, with the new Government of Angola enjoying the support of all political parties, the time has come to make an additional effort to finalize the work. Prompt normalization of State administration, completion of the formation of a unified armed forces and a national police, as well as a conclusion of the process of demobilization of uncommissioned UNITA military personnel, should figure prominently on the agenda of the new Angolan authorities. The same is true of the steps to be taken with regard to the economic and social rehabilitation of the country, especially those relating to the humanitarian situation and demining programmes. Speaking of the acute problem of mines, we feel obliged to express our concern at the slow pace of demining.

My delegation believes that the new Government of Angola, as well as the parties that constitute it, will show enough resolve to overcome the difficulties which may be encountered on the way to peace and security in Angola.

We also hope that a long-awaited meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi will soon take place within Angolan territory giving impetus to a prompt resolution of all outstanding issues.

For many years the international community has been investing substantial resources, both human and material, in the settlement of the Angolan conflict. We believe that now, with the Government and people of that country just about to take the final steps in their common quest for a peaceful future, this foreign assistance should not be ceased. With this in view, the Polish delegation supports the Secretary-General's recommendation concerning the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) until 30 June 1997 and will vote in favour of the draft resolution the Security Council is considering today. The extension of the UNAVEM III mandate for an additional 10 weeks would allow time for the consideration of the modalities of a future observer mission, as well as for the establishment of mechanisms and arrangements for a smooth transition from the current military operation in Angola into another form of United Nations presence.

While welcoming the achievements of recent days, we have to remember how complicated the Angolan road to peace was. Consequently, we do not think that the Security Council, or indeed the international community, can afford to neglect further developments in that country, which happens to be close to a region prone to social, economic, political and military crisis.

My delegation shares the Secretary-General's view that never before has Angola been so close to the final resolution of the conflict and to the attainment of lasting peace. The prosperous future of that country depends, as it always has, on the wisdom and political will of Angolan leaders and their people, as well as on their ability to peacefully resolve their problems and differences.

In conclusion, let me express on behalf of my delegation our highest appreciation to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative for Angola, Maître Alioune Blondin Beye, and the three observer States for their tireless efforts aimed at promoting peace in Angola.

We also pay tribute to all the men and women of UNAVEM III and of the previous United Nations operations in Angola for their courage and for the sacrifices they made for the peaceful future of that country.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): The French delegation will certainly support the draft resolution that will be put to the vote to extend the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) until 30 June 1997. When resolution 1098 (1997) was adopted in February, our delegation expressed its concern about the delays affecting the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol and

had to point out that it was UNITA which was essentially responsible for those delays. But since then, the evolution of the situation in Angola has been particularly encouraging and, as the Secretary-General points out for the first time, an end is about to be put to a devastating conflict. We are nearing a settlement, as indicated by the Secretary-General.

This is the favourable result of all the efforts made to help Angola, notably those of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Maître Blondin Beye. Like previous speakers, we would like to express our great gratitude to them.

France welcomed the formation of the Angolan Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, which was officially inaugurated in Luanda on 11 April 1997. This event marks a crucial stage in the process of peace and reconciliation begun in Lusaka in November 1994. The inauguration of this Government opens a new era in the history of a country bruised by more than 20 years of civil war.

In the past two years, France and its European Union partners have of course supported United Nations endeavours to ensure implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. Today, we wish to assure the new Angolan Government of the complete willingness of the French authorities actively to help the new Government in its task of reconstructing and developing a reconciled Angola.

While it is the new Government and the Angolan people that must define the future of their country, France is nonetheless convinced that the international community must remain in Angola to facilitate the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. It is in this spirit that we welcome the recommendations of the Secretary-General regarding the future of the United Nations presence in Angola with a view to supporting and to consolidating the process of national reconciliation, which will guarantee political stability and lasting development in that country.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*interpretation from French*): This debate is marked with particular distinction because it is taking place just a few days after important political events in Angola. In addition, by a fortunate combination of circumstances, our deliberations are taking place under the presidency of the representative of Portugal, a friendly country whose history is closely linked with that of Angola and of Guinea-Bissau, my own country. It is significant and gratifying that this is so.

The Angolan Government and UNITA finally proceeded to form a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation on 11 April. This is assuredly a great victory for the Angolans, a victory whose political scope transcends the national frontiers of Angola, because it corresponds to the wish of the entire international community to see this country emerge from the vicious cycle of violence and devote itself to working for the well-being of all its citizens without distinction. The Angolans have many reasons to rejoice and to demonstrate their happiness, which many of us will be pleased to share.

Yes, the Angolan people believe that a new day has dawned, that a new point of departure has been reached, that a new hope has risen. We hope that nothing will frustrate or destroy this. The Angolan people wish to have confidence in their leaders and in their capacity to out-do themselves, to stand up to present challenges by concerting their efforts and working together, tirelessly, towards building their future — a future which, even yesterday, was uncertain and remote because it was obscured by so many years of confrontation, destruction and bereavement. The Angolans are convinced that it is possible that their nation can be reborn from the ashes of war.

Angolans are a courageous people who do not shrink from any ordeal, provided that they are assured that the road before them is the right one to follow, that the sacrifices of the present are worth making, and that destiny — their destiny — which they have placed in the hands of their political leaders, will be protected and defended with honour. That is why nothing should be done that would check this new surge of mutual recognition or stifle this bold spirit of good-neighbourliness, which will, it seems, from now on dwell in the hearts of the men and women of that country.

Every necessary step must be taken to respond to the cries of distress of the thousands of victims of an atrocious war that has continued for too long. Every corpse that lines the path of peace should serve as a beacon that lights the way for erstwhile enemies in their efforts to move towards national reconciliation. It is proper, therefore, to remember their sacrifices, heal their wounds and concern ourselves with their future. If peace in Angola is to be consolidated and to endure, it will require the contribution of all the vital forces of the nation, in a burst of national energy, to bring together in perfect synergy all the skill at the country's disposal.

A decisive phase has just been completed in Angola. We share the pride felt by all those who accompanied the Angolan people in their long quest for peace. I am thinking in particular of the Secretary-General of the United Nations who, as soon as he assumed office, took charge of the issue and succeeded, in particular as a result of his visits to Luanda and Bailundo last March, in promoting a salutary thaw in the situation, to which end his Special Representative, Maître Blondin Beye, worked tirelessly. We will never be able to express how much we owe to the civilian and military personnel of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) for having so perfectly accomplished their mission. It is fitting to pay tribute here to the memory of those many among them who are, unfortunately, no longer with us and to whom this great victory should be dedicated. We should also like to thank the troika countries for their contribution.

The international community committed itself wholeheartedly to the search for a solution to the Angolan crisis. The United Nations undertook there the most important peacekeeping operation that it has carried out to date. A great deal of financial support was necessary to ensure that it proceeded smoothly. That demonstrates what a great responsibility we now bear for ensuring that everything continues as planned for the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. Much remains to be done, particular in completing the incorporation of UNITA soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces and training the National Police. It will also be essential to strengthen the links of solidarity between Angolans by ensuring that, throughout the national territory, there will be an effective and equitable State administration that is capable of imbuing every citizen with a sense of belonging to a single country.

The international community must help Angolans to learn to live together again and to trust, understand and help each other. Many psychological obstacles remain to be overcome. It should be remembered that we must promote a culture of peace and forgiveness in that country. How much destruction has been provoked by all those years of confrontation and combat? How many widows, orphans and people mutilated by exploding mines bear witness to the horrors of which men are capable? Do they not need a hand to be stretched out to them to help them to regain their proper place in society?

International assistance will therefore be necessary for a long time to come. That is why we endorse the analysis and the recommendations contained in the two most recent reports of the Secretary-General. He has proposed initiatives and structures that my delegation believes are commensurate with the challenges of the present and take full account of the new realities to which the Angolan people will have to adapt in the future. We believe that extending the mandate of UNAVEM III until 30 June 1997 is essential in order to consolidate what has already been achieved and to ensure the completion of the objectives laid down in the Lusaka Protocol. We hope that the timetable established for the gradual withdrawal of the military component will be respected, without in any way damaging the peace process as a whole.

The proposal of the Secretary-General with regard to the establishment, on 1 July 1997, of a United Nations Observer Mission in Angola, is worthy of all our consideration, as it takes into account the need to maintain the political balance that has already been established and to create the necessary conditions for the Angolans themselves to take charge of their future. This Mission will also help the Angolans to perfect their new system of government, one of whose major responsibilities will be to guarantee to all citizens the full enjoyment of their civil and political rights. In this respect, therefore, the international community will have to continue to support the efforts of the United Nations in both the humanitarian and financial spheres.

We have said how much we welcome the progress achieved in the peace process in Angola. My country, Guinea-Bissau, has, at every stage of Angola's long march towards liberty and peace, continued to display solidarity with the Angolan people — a brotherly people to which we are linked by many affinities and historic ties. We hope that President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi, in their wisdom and great magnanimity, will respond to the appeal of their people who, together with the rest of the international community, are calling upon them to meet together in a spirit of give and take so that national reconciliation in Angola can be sealed once and for all.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The inauguration on 11 April 1997 of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Angola is undoubtedly an important positive development and is welcomed by Egypt. We should also like to welcome other recent political achievements in Angola. The most important of these are, perhaps, the arrival in Luanda of most of the UNITA deputies, and the fact that they have taken their seats in the National Assembly; and the enactment of a law on the special status of Mr. Savimbi and his role in political life in Angola. These are all

important achievements whose effects cannot be jeopardized by those negative elements that, for the most part, result from the feeling of insecurity and lack of trust after more than two decades of destructive civil war.

What has taken place in Angola is truly a triumph of the will for peace. It represents the hopes of the Angolan people for stability and security that will allow them to begin truly to exercise their national right to life and development. Those achievements would have been impossible without the sustained efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Maître Blondin Beye, and the support of the three troika States for his endeavours. Furthermore, the presence of 13 Heads of State at the inauguration ceremony of the new Government provides the best evidence of the concern of the international community, particularly African States, for the establishment of peace in Angola and its economic development efforts.

My delegation must observe that these positive political developments have not been matched by similar progress in the military aspects of the Lusaka Protocol, which remain to be implemented. The most important of these are the disarming of civilians, to enable the Government to extend full authority throughout the entire State territory, and incorporation of selected UNITA soldiers into a unified armed forces. All these matters are pending. My delegation hopes that solutions to these urgent issues will be found in the near future. Perhaps arranging a meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi soon would be a step towards a final settlement of these issues.

The delegation of Egypt fully supports the Secretary-General's recommendations, contained in his two most recent reports to the Council, on the future of the United Nations presence in Angola, particularly as they relate, first, to the creation of a new United Nations observer mission in Angola (UNOMA) on 1 July 1997 as the successor to UNAVEM III, which would monitor the completion by both parties of the implementation of remaining military commitments and support national reconciliation; and secondly, to maintaining the Special Representative in Luanda with the appropriate human-resources support.

We agree with the Secretary-General that Angola needs the aid of the international community today perhaps more than ever before. As we all know, the war has destroyed the State infrastructure, including education and health facilities. The war has also spawned some 10 million landmines, one for each Angolan. In addition, there are more than a million displaced persons inside Angola's borders and about 300,000 refugees in neighbouring States. Briefly, these are the conditions of the next phase awaiting the Angolan Government, which require all available assistance and support from the international community and relevant United Nations bodies to realize the hopes and aspirations of the Angolan people for a better life. Egypt will withhold no possible help or support from the brotherly people of Angola.

Finally, the delegation of Egypt supports the extension of the mandate of UNAVEM III until 30 June 1997 and will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Council.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): My country is particularly pleased to participate in this historic debate on Angola, which comes at a turning point in the turbulent history of that country. The journey in the search for a lasting and durable peace in Angola has been a long and arduous one. The people of Angola have endured more than 25 years of devastating civil war. They have lived with the darkness of despair and sorrow. They have seen their loved ones die or be maimed and the promise of hope denied them for too long.

It is against this background that we celebrate with the Angolan people as they usher in a new era filled with the possibility of lasting peace, as witnessed by the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation on 11 April 1997.

Kenya's involvement in the peace process goes back to the period before Angola's independence. The leaders of the three Angolan liberation movements, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola and UNITA, chose Kenya as the venue for their peace talks under the chairmanship of the late founding father of our Republic, President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, who helped broker the first peace accord after six days of crucial talks on 21 June 1975 in State House Nakuru.

Addressing the gathering after the signing ceremony, as the three leaders, Mr. Agostinho Neto, Mr. Holden Roberto and Mr. Jonas Savimbi, hugged each other and shook hands amidst wild cheers from Kenyan ministers and local and overseas journalists, President Kenyatta appealed to the Angolan leaders to unite at home in order to implement measures they had agreed upon to bring about peace, security and freedom in Angola. The three

leaders agreed, among other things, to stop fighting and to create a climate of political tolerance and national unity within the political and ideological diversity of Angola.

Following this agreement, they proceeded to the coastal city of Mombasa, where, with the late President, they planted a fig tree to symbolize hope and renewal — a prayer for peace. Sadly, the fruits of that happy ending did not see the light of day.

Just as the planting of the fig tree then symbolized hope, the formation of a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation now represents the hope, faith and aspirations of the Angolan people for a durable peace in their country.

The important agreements reached between the parties, including the swearing in of UNITA deputies, mark in our view a crucial step towards the full realization of the Lusaka Protocol, and, indeed, a momentous milestone in the Angolan peace process. Kenya fervently hopes that the leaders of Angola will now give something back to their people, by moving decisively away from an era of confrontation and manoeuvring, into one of tolerance, compromise and brotherhood. We strongly encourage them to do so.

The achievements reached thus far could not have been possible without the collective, painstaking efforts and encouragement by many. We single out, and highly commend, the superb role played by the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Angola, Maître Alioune Blondin Beye. His diligence and persistence in the face of numerous odds and trying conditions, coupled with the unyielding efforts of the troika of Portugal, the Russian Federation and United States of America, the Organization of African Unity and all other actors, finally won the day.

Let me temper my cautious optimism by urging all interested parties not to relent in their efforts to ensure the complete resolution of the conflict. The same energy we expended in the search for peace should be exerted to ensure that this process becomes irreversible. We are on the last lap of a long race. Let us redouble our efforts and not lose sight of the finishing tape.

Notwithstanding these hard-won, commendable achievements, my delegation is aware that a lot more needs to be done. We hope that the prevailing spirit of reconciliation will accelerate the pace towards implementation of the remaining aspects of the peace process. The speedy incorporation of selected UNITA soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces and the Angolan National Police will soon be considered by the Joint Commission. We wish them success. We are concerned that the proposed rapid demobilization programme of excess UNITA personnel in the central and southern regions has not been quickly implemented, which has resulted in even more hardship for UNITA soldiers and their families.

The resumption of the exercise of disarming the civilian population should be carried out in tandem with this. The large number of absentees and deserters from the selection and demobilization centres continues to be of concern to us because of the potential for random flare-ups. The removal of all the illegal checkpoints maintained by both parties, taken together with the other measures, will help in the normalization and extension of State administration throughout the country. In this new spirit we believe that a meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Jonas Savimbi in Angola will represent an important confidence-building measure towards further strengthening national reconciliation.

The progress that has been achieved is political. In our view, the more difficult journey, that of social and economic reconstruction, must now begin in earnest. The war that our sisterly country suffered resulted in great loss. The infrastructure of Angola is in tatters. Schools, hospitals, waterworks, roads, railways — the hardware of a civil society — need to be completely rebuilt.

It is for these reasons that we have to help Angola now. The peace that has been woven so delicately must be supported, and we encourage those in a position to do so to be generous. It is incumbent upon the international community to respond. My delegation believes that the post-conflict reconstruction of Angola is the last piece of the puzzle.

We are convinced that the United Nations should continue to play an active role in Angola. We concur with the Secretary-General's recommendation contained in document S/1997/304 of 14 April 1997 that the mandate of UNAVEM III be extended for a final period until 30 June 1997. We also agree that there is need for a follow-on arrangement, which would help consolidate the new peace and national reconciliation among the Angolan people. Accordingly, my delegation will support the draft resolution before us.

Finally, we wish the people of Angola all the best, and appeal to their leaders, as brothers from the same

continent, to give peace a chance. I echo the words of our founding father 25 years ago when he expressed confidence

> "that Kenya and Angola will continue to cooperate and strengthen their fruitful relations for the mutual benefit of the peoples of the two countries".

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): The United States commends and congratulates the former Government and UNITA for the recent events in Luanda, including the National Assembly's 8 April passage of a law establishing a special position of trust and honour for the leader of the largest opposition party, the 9 April seating of the UNITA members of Parliament, and, most important, the 11 April formation of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation. These events mark the passage of the highest hurdle of the peace process, the moment in which the parties reunite into one entity focused on the common goal of bringing a better life to all Angolans.

We all recognize that the formation of the unity Government is not an end in itself and alone does not guarantee the success of the peace process. There will be times in the future when the new partners in governance will disagree strongly on questions of policy and become discouraged with the process. Nonetheless, the formation of the unity Government is an essential step forward and represents a commitment to political pluralism and reconciliation. The parties must stay the course and work together to build on the foundation they established last week.

Of course, more needs to be done. Of highest priority is the rapid induction of selected former UNITA personnel into the armed forces and police, and the demobilization of the others. The unity Government will need these military and police units that include former UNITA personnel for the next difficult task, that is, the extension of State administration to all parts of the country. The parties must work closely together to ensure that the people in the areas not yet under Government control are given the legal protections and humane treatment afforded to other Angolan citizens.

A special responsibility falls upon the largest party, the MPLA, to ensure that UNITA is taken on as a true partner, that it is given meaningful roles to perform in the Government, and that it is provided with sufficient resources to carry them out. UNITA also bears a major responsibility in assuring the success of the unity Government. We strongly encourage the president of UNITA, Mr. Savimbi, to take advantage of the special position now legally established for him by meeting frequently with President Dos Santos in Angola to share his views. We hope that Mr. Savimbi will meet with President Dos Santos at the earliest opportunity. We call upon all members of the unity Government to work cooperatively for effective and representative government.

The international community still has an important role to play in supporting the process of national reconciliation and reconstruction. Today we are renewing the mandate of UNAVEM III until 30 June 1997. We are also signalling our intention to consider a follow-on observer mission to assist the parties to complete the remaining tasks of the peace process. Demobilization and resettlement, refugee assistance, demining, strengthening of democracy and governance, economic reform, and management development are other areas in which Angola needs international support. The United States is committed to providing over $90 million in assistance this year. We call upon other Member States to make a substantial commitment.

As this peace process matures, we continue to be concerned by persistent reports of Angolan involvement in the conflict in Zaire. Further destabilization of Zaire is not in Africa's interest. We call upon all Angolans to put an immediate halt to such actions and to give their full support to the international effort led by the United Nations/Organization of African Unity Special Representative, Mr. Sahnoun, to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict on the basis of the United Nations five-point peace plan.

Finally, the United States would like to recognize the unflagging work of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Maître Alioune Blondin Beye, in bringing about the formation of the unity Government. We wish the unity Government full success in completing all the tasks agreed to in the Lusaka Protocol and in establishing a firm foundation for Angolan peace and prosperity.

The President: There are still a number of speakers on my list. The next meeting of the Council to continue consideration of the item on its agenda will take place this afternoon at 3.30.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.3768

Security Council

Fifty-second Year

Provisional

3768th Meeting

Wednesday, 16 April 1997, 1.10 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Monteiro	(Portugal)
Members:	Chile	Mr. Somavía
	China	Mr. Wang Xuexian
	Costa Rica	Mr. Sáenz Biolley
	Egypt	Mr. Elaraby
	France	Mr. Thiebaud
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Cabral
	Japan	Mr. Owada
	Kenya	Mr. Rana
	Poland	Mr. Matuszewski
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Choi
	Russian Federation	Mr. Fedotov
	Sweden	Mr. Osvald
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston
	United States of America	Mr. Richardson

Agenda

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

97-85408 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 1.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the case of an Iraqi aircraft which flew from Baghdad, Iraq to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on 9 April 1997 and then departed.

"The Government of Iraq, in a letter dated 3 February 1997, had requested clearance from the Committee established pursuant to resolution 661 (1990) for the release of 50 million dollars from the frozen Iraqi assets being held in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates to cover pilgrimage costs and requested the agreement of the Committee for flights by Iraqi Airways to transport those pilgrims to Jeddah, during the holy pilgrimage season.

"The Committee answered in a letter dated 3 March 1997 that it would be in a better position to consider the release of the frozen Iraqi funds if a request was submitted by a country which was willing to release such funds to meet the pilgrimage costs.

"The Government of Iraq proceeded with this particular flight without specific consultation with the Committee. Such consultation would have allowed the Committee to consider the matter and to determine whether the flight required Committee approval under the relevant resolutions.

"The Security Council draws to the attention of Member States their obligations under resolutions 661 (1990), 670 (1990) and other relevant resolutions.

"The Council underlines its respect for the obligation of Muslims to perform the Hajj pilgrimage."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/1997/21.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.3769

Security Council
Fifty-second Year

Provisional

3769th Meeting
Wednesday, 16 April 1997, 3.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Monteiro	(Portugal)
Members:	Chile	Mr. Somavía
	China	Mr. Wang Xuexian
	Costa Rica	Mr. Sáenz Biolley
	Egypt	Mr. Elaraby
	France	Mr. Thiebaud
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Da Gama
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Poland	Mr. Wrobel
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Choi
	Russian Federation	Mr. Sergeev
	Sweden	Mr. Osvald
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Richmond
	United States of America	Mr. Inderfurth

Agenda

The situation in Angola

Progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) (S/1997/304)

97-85414 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Angola

Progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) (S/1997/304)

The President: In accordance with the decisions taken at the 3767th meeting, I invite the representative of Angola to take a seat at the Council table; I invite the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Cameroon, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Peru, Qatar, South Africa, Uruguay and Zimbabwe to take the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Van Dunem "Mbinda" (Angola) took a seat at the Council table; Ms. Ramirez (Argentina), Mr. Amorim (Brazil), Mr. Mpay (Cameroon), Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho), Mr. Rubadiri (Malawi), Mr. Santos (Mozambique), Mr. Biegman (Netherlands), Mr. Guillén (Peru), Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar), Mr. Jele (South Africa), Mr. Benítez Sáenz (Uruguay) and Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Botswana, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Legwaila (Botswana) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Mr. Osvald (Sweden): The Netherlands will speak later in the debate on behalf of the European Union. Sweden, of course, stands fully behind that statement.

In recent weeks, a breakthrough has taken place in the Angolan peace process. The formation of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, as well as the installation of the UNITA deputies in the National Assembly, are vital steps towards the fulfilment of the Lusaka Protocol. Sweden also welcomes the agreement reached on the special status of the leader of UNITA as the Leader of the Largest Opposition Party.

A stable political environment is essential for social and economic rehabilitation and long-term reconciliation. Further strengthening the democratic process in Angola is therefore of great significance. An exchange between the Swedish and Angolan Parliaments has been initiated to support this process.

Important political and military elements of the peace accords remain to be fulfilled. In particular, it is imperative that the incorporation of selected UNITA soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces and the implementation of the demobilization plan be completed without further delay.

The normalization of the State administration throughout the country is another important issue. It will require cooperation on a national, regional and local level. All efforts should be made to complete this process while the formed military units of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) remain in Angola.

The role of the United Nations in promoting and facilitating the Angolan peace process will continue to be vital. United Nations involvement is needed to see the peace process through to its conclusion and to help consolidate the progress which has been achieved. Sweden will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Security Council today, extending the mandate of UNAVEM III to 30 June 1997. We also support the proposal of the Secretary-General that UNAVEM III be succeeded by an Observer Mission. The transition between UNAVEM III and its successor should be a smooth one, and we therefore fully support the intention of the Secretary-General to begin preparations for the change in the composition and focus of the United Nations presence in Angola.

As we move into this period of transition, the phasing down of UNAVEM III's military units must continue to be adapted to developments on the ground. We must also bear in mind the continued need for the security of all United Nations personnel to be assured.

For its part, Sweden has contributed military observers, civilian police and demining experts to UNAVEM III. Angola also remains one of the major recipients of Swedish assistance in the development, demining and humanitarian fields. Sweden will give a positive response to the consolidated appeal for Angola launched recently by the Secretary-General. We urge other States to do the same. Contributions to the appeal are needed for the successful implementation of the demobilization and reintegration plan.

We must take this opportunity to build on the progress already made and move ahead to create the foundation for durable peace in Angola. Having come so far, the former adversaries should continue on the road to peace and fulfil their remaining commitments under the peace accords. The ultimate responsibility for restoring peace remains with the Angolans themselves. The international community must, however, continue to lend its support to what remains to be accomplished. Sweden stands firm in its long-standing commitment to the peace process in Angola.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate our gratitude to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative, Maître Blondin Beye, and the three observer States — Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States — for their efforts to assist the peace process in Angola.

Mr. Sáenz Biolley (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the Government of Costa Rica, I am pleased to welcome the establishment on 11 April 1997 of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, which is a milestone in the recent history of Africa and the world. The inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in fulfilment of the Lusaka Protocol is a very important step in the peace process in that country, which has put an end to a long-lasting fratricidal war.

Some years ago, Central America, torn by civil wars that threatened to become internationalized and to devastate the region, decided on its own, and with the support of the international community, to take its destiny into its own hands and forge a just and lasting peace. We therefore understand and fully appreciate the magnitude of the decision taken by the Angolan people to shoulder their own responsibilities with the support and solidarity of the international community. In this connection, My delegation pays tribute to the countries members of the troika and to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Maître Blondin Beye.

It is true that there are still tasks pending, mainly with regard to the incorporation of former UNITA soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces and the Angolan National Police; desertion by former combatants from selection and demobilization centres; the dismantling of illegal checkpoints; information concerning the weaponry and strength of the security detachment of the UNITA leader; the handing over of UNITA communication equipment; and the situation regarding UNITA radio, among others.

Costa Rica was struck by the statement in the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) that there are

"recent reports of involvement by the Angolan parties in the Zairian conflict." *(S/1997/304, para. 10)*

If this information should prove to be accurate, it would represent a grave risk of instability, not only in Angola but in other parts of Africa. If that is the case, the parties should abstain from any intervention in Zaire.

On the humanitarian front, Costa Rica believes that efforts should be redoubled for the demobilization and social integration of UNITA soldiers, as this is a very important factor for future stability and the establishment of lasting peace in Angola. Moreover, humanitarian assistance to the people of Angola should be maintained, for, as paragraph 22 of the report (S/1997/248) of the Secretary-General indicates, drought has affected the country and damaged the harvest in the coastal region and in the northern provinces, and also because many people displaced by the war have still not been able to return to their places of origin. We hope that the authority of the State and normalcy will be re-established throughout the territory with the advent of the new Government so that immunization programmes, the programme to seek out family members, the demobilization of child soldiers and the continuation of demining programmes, among others, can be carried out without mishap.

Costa Rica believes that the new Government of Angola must secure the greatest well-being for its people through appropriate and prudent economic measures in

order to reduce inflation and slow down the decline in the people's purchasing power, as the Secretary-General indicates in paragraph 29 of his report (S/1997/248). These are some of the problems that can most severely afflict a people and that can erode democracy. This will certainly require a comprehensive and constructive approach by the international community and especially by international financial organizations.

Finally, the Government of Costa Rica urges His Excellency the President of Angola and Mr. Savimbi to meet with a view to taking up matters that they consider relevant to solidifying further the peace process, as a further contribution within their already fruitful cooperative efforts.

I would like to state Costa Rica's agreement with the extension of the UNAVEM III mandate until 30 June 1997, on the understanding that it will then be replaced by a mission to consolidate peace, which we hope will have a major humanitarian component and will also safeguard respect for human rights.

We hope that the draft resolution that is now being adopted will be a further contribution to building the Angolan people's dream of peace.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Malawi. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rubadiri (Malawi): We would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. We also congratulate your predecessor, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Poland, who presided over Council matters last month.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) contained in document S/1997/304 of 14 April 1997. Most significantly, we rejoice with the international community at the most wonderful news that has come from Angola, that beautiful country full of people whose resilience amid pain and suffering has touched many of our hearts.

We are informed that the ceremony that ushered in the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation on 11 April 1997 was solemn and moving. Many of our leaders were present at the ceremony, including Malawi's own President. They witnessed the symbolic renewal by the Angolan Government and UNITA of a covenant not to allow, yet again, the people of Angola to languish in misery and despair. The international community now expects the two sides to keep their solemn promises and to take greater strides in consolidating peace, tranquillity and reconciliation throughout the whole of Angola, and in that way, also throughout our continent of Africa.

There is no doubt that the developments that have taken place in that part of our region in the past two weeks have been most encouraging and augur well for the future of Angola and the region as a whole. We urge both sides to continue by being magnanimous and by taking the necessary vital steps in the implementation of the remaining and outstanding aspects of the Lusaka Protocol.

As the Secretary-General has rightly observed, much remains to be done. Fortunately, the essential components are attainable. All that is required is the necessary will, particularly on the part of UNITA. It is imperative that all the military and police aspects of the process be addressed resolutely. We enjoin the Joint Commission to continue playing the positive role it has assumed, especially on the question of the incorporation of UNITA soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces and the Angolan National Police. The other aspects of the question commented upon in paragraph 19 of the Secretary-General's report also require urgent attention. But perhaps most important is a meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi, which would definitely add fresh impetus towards a firm and final solution, building confidence, trust and honourable commitment to the building of a new nation on our continent. My delegation strongly supports the holding of such a meeting as soon as possible.

The situation in Angola has now reached its most critical and delicate stage. It is important that we should all harness our efforts to ensure that nothing goes wrong again. The international community must continue to play an important part in ensuring that Angola returns to full normalcy. We therefore support the proposal of the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 20 of his report. We also support his previous calls for financial and other assistance to Angola. We specifically invite the international community to fulfil the pledges made at the 1995 Brussels Round Table Conference.

We wish to conclude by once again paying tribute to the Secretary-General, to Mr. Alioune Blondin Beye, his Special Representative, to UNAVEM III personnel and

to all those who have lost their lives in this sad and tragic story, the brave that have worked tirelessly in the search for peace in Angola. The events of the last two weeks show what dedication and perseverance can do to fulfil our prayers for love and peace in Angola. It is our prayer that the renewal of the mandate of UNAVEM III and its eventual transition will finally help to consolidate the gains already made.

As an African, from an African country and from the southern region of Africa, I believe that the rebirth of Angola will strengthen the new growth and the new hope that our countries — which have for a large part of this century suffered through the problems of building up new democracies — are slowly beginning to show for democracy and human rights observers.

The President: I thank the representative of Malawi for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Brazil. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): It is with great pleasure that I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. Your competent guidance, which has already assisted the Security Council in discharging its responsibilities effectively during the first half of your tenure, will undoubtedly have a favourable impact on the consideration of the item before us today, to which both our countries ascribe such great importance. Brazil is particularly satisfied to see you, the Permanent Representative of Portugal, presiding over the Security Council when the prospects for lasting peace in Angola are so encouraging. The symbolism of this circumstance will not go unnoticed. I would like also to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Zbigniew Wlosowicz, for his leadership in presiding over the Council during the month of March.

I wish to pay a special tribute to the Secretary-General for his timely visit to Angola, which has had a very positive impact on the peace process. The efforts of his Special Representative, Maitre Blondin Beye, continue to be essential for the successful conclusion of the process. Likewise, the endeavours of the troika of observer States deserve our recognition.

The Council has met during recent months in a sombre mood of unease and apprehension over the situation in Angola. Last Friday, however, a historic event of momentous significance was witnessed by the Angolan people in Luanda. After more than 30 years of devastating war, a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation was sworn in. While the frequent setbacks in Angola do not allow us to welcome the latest developments without a degree of caution, the establishment of the new Government should indeed be hailed as a milestone. As a single united Government of Angola takes up the daunting task of providing all Angolans with the political stability and economic development which they have so long awaited, it is our sincerest hope that a successful transition to democratic pluralism will replace, once and for all, the violence and mistrust which have historically marked relations between the Government and UNITA.

The Secretary-General's recent trip to Angola was instrumental in keeping the process moving in the right direction. His contacts with President José Eduardo dos Santos and Mr. Jonas Savimbi contributed to bringing the Government and UNITA closer together, thus providing an added incentive for discussions on a programme of Government. With the approval by the Angolan National Assembly of a draft law, previously agreed upon between the Government and UNITA, the status of Mr. Jonas Savimbi was finally settled, and the last obstacles to the establishment of a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation were overcome.

We took pride in the fact that during his stay in Angola the Secretary-General visited the Brazilian battalion headquarters in Cuito. As in the past, and now more than ever, Brazil remains ready to cooperate with all Angolans in the construction of a brighter future.

We agree with the Secretary-General when he states in his report that much remains to be done. The extension of the administration of the Government to all areas of the country, the demobilization of UNITA personnel, the completion of the formation of the unified armed forces and the national police are still challenges to be dealt with. In his report, the Secretary-General proposed the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) until 30 June 1997 and its replacement as of 1 July by an observer mission. We welcome this suggestion in the firm expectation that the political scenario in Angola will continue to improve. The international community must persevere in showing its readiness to help Angolans. The arguments in favour of the replacement of UNAVEM III by an observer

mission are indeed persuasive in the light of present trends.

Prosperity and national reconciliation in Angola are now at hand. Brazil wishes to renew the expression of its fraternal solidarity to the Angolan people as we contemplate the promise of a new era of peace.

The President: I thank the representative of Brazil for the very warm words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Bergh (South Africa): My delegation, Sir, joins previous speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. Your well-known skills assure us that the Council's business is in good hands. We also congratulate the representative of Poland for his successful stewardship of the Council's deliberations last month.

We thank the Secretary-General for his lucid and gratifying report on the situation in Angola. We would like to commend him, his Special Representative, Mr. Blondin Beye, and the representatives of the three observer States for their consistent efforts in ensuring that the peace process is kept on track. Indeed, these efforts have now been rewarded by the promulgation of legislation on the status of Mr. Savimbi, the swearing in of UNITA deputies and the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation.

The inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is an event which heralds a new era of peace and stability in Angola. This is an era which the peoples and the Governments of southern Africa see as representing an extension of the process of democratization in our region. We commend the Angolan leaders for this display of statesmanship.

South Africa welcomes the decision of the Joint Commission to dispatch special groups to quartering and demobilization centres to assess the situation and to identify measures that will help accelerate the incorporation of UNITA soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces and the Angolan National Police. We urge cooperation with the Joint Commission in its endeavour, as the slow pace of the incorporation of UNITA soldiers and their desertion from the demobilization centres remain a cause of concern and warrant urgent attention.

We also hope that both parties will demonstrate zeal when dealing with the dismantling of the remaining illegal command posts and checkpoints and the disarmament of the civilian population. We firmly believe that cooperation based on good faith and mutual trust will facilitate the implementation of all the agreements contained in the Lusaka Protocol.

We wish to underscore once again the urgency of a meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi. This long-awaited meeting will provide an opportune moment for both parties to address the outstanding prickly issues and to chart the way forward.

The optimism generated by the current developments in Angola should not obscure the difficult challenges that lie ahead. Angola will need the continued generous support of the donor community. This support is crucial for the reconstruction and development of the war-ravaged economic infrastructure and for the creation of an environment conducive to social reintegration.

My delegation supports the recommendation of the Secretary- General for the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) until 30 June 1997 and for the subsequent establishment on 1 July 1997 of a United Nations observer mission in Angola. The establishment of an observer mission is necessary for the completion of military and other tasks and for the consolidation of the national reconciliation process. We consider that the implementation of this recommendation is essential to ensure that stability and lasting peace manifest themselves in Angola.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Uruguay. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Benítez Sáenz (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation felt the need to speak in the Security Council on this subject because we consider the peacekeeping process in Angola to be entering a phase that is doubly important: it is important for my country, Uruguay; and it is important for the peace process itself. It is important for Uruguay because, with the recent withdrawal of our troops, we feel that we have reached a new stage in the long course that Uruguay has been following for many years, contributing to peacekeeping

in many regions of the world. The first such mission was in 1935, many years before the existence of the United Nations; since the creation of the Organization, we have participated in 14 missions, contributing approximately 8,000 men.

In the case of Angola, the Uruguayan unit was the first to be deployed in the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) area, shortly after the 1994 peace accords that enabled Angola to enjoy the longest period of peace that it has known in the past 30 years. Twenty days ago, the withdrawal of the Uruguayan battalion from Angola was completed, and of the original 800 men on duty just 70 remain in the region.

Together with other troop-contributing countries, we have shouldered our responsibilities, conscious of being a stabilizing factor in the peace process. We are proud of our participation in this force in the service of the United Nations.

As my comments suggest, my country is very pleased to have contributed to yet another mission in the service of world peace. The new experience gained has continued to enhance the professionalism of our armed forces, and we stand ever ready to provide the United Nations with our support, whether in new peacekeeping missions, or by passing on our experience — another means by which Uruguay can contribute to the Organization.

We acknowledge and welcome in particular the contribution of the Secretary-General through his visit to Angola from 22 to 25 March 1997. The results of that visit are reflected in his comments on 11 April and also in his report on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III). I should also like to add that Uruguay appreciates the responsible attitude and the sensitivity shown by the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and the Force Commander in carrying out their mandates.

Furthermore, we consider this to be a vital moment for the peace process itself. Despite the optimism shown in the report, the future still holds the challenge of attaining lasting peace in Angola. The extension of State administration to the entire territory is an objective that should be met as quickly as possible. Social reintegration of ex-combatants in Angola is still an issue of concern, and we call for close monitoring of the general process of disarming the population. The slow speed of integration into the armed forces, as well as the latent threat that the Angolan parties might intervene in Zaire, are the most worrying aspects of this issue. In this context, there is a need for greater cooperation on the part of the developed countries so that assistance in demobilization can be guaranteed and funding provided in a timely manner.

In his report, the Secretary-General referred specifically to the need to prepare for the observer mission that will replace UNAVEM III. At the same time, however, we must assume that the United Nations cannot remain in Angola forever. Just as we have completed the withdrawal plan, we must also be aware of our continuing responsibility to strengthen the civilian and humanitarian presence in the area. There is also a need for the transition process to proceed smoothly, so that the problems emerging in certain regions do not tarnish the victory that has already been achieved: that of giving Angola the longest period of peace that it has known in the past three decades.

Uruguay is fully prepared to continue to participate, within its means, in the reconstruction of Angola and is prepared to offer its support for any other undertaking planned for UNAVEM III. In this respect, we can state that we are now in a position to offer additional police observers for deployment on the ground.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Mozambique. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique): My delegation would like to join preceding speakers in extending to you, Sir, our sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. We are particularly happy to see you presiding over the Council's deliberations on the important item before it today. We would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor for the brilliant manner in which he presided over the Council's work last month.

Allow me to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for the role he has played in the Angolan peace process, particulary during his last visit to the country. His visit gave a new impetus to the process, and encouraged the reaffirmation of the commitment of both the Angolan Government and UNITA to fulfil the agreements they entered into.

It was with great joy that the people and the Government of Mozambique welcomed, and witnessed, the installation of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Angola after many years of procrastination and seemingly endless suffering for the

Angolan people. The formation of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, and the return of UNITA deputies to their seats in the National Assembly, mark an important step towards stability and the normalization of the situation in Angola. The people of Angola are, more than ever before, near to the final resolution of the devastating conflict and to the attainment of lasting peace.

The Angolans can now concentrate their efforts on national reconstruction, economic recovery and promoting the development of their country. We congratulate the Angolans for the courage and the spirit of reconciliation that they have demonstrated.

The establishment of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is an important step, but not the end in itself. Much more should be done to implement other aspects of the Lusaka Protocol. There is a need to move expeditiously to normalize State administration throughout the country, to complete the formation of the unified Armed Forces and the National Police and to demobilize the excess UNITA military personnel. The large number of deserters and absentees from the selection and demobilization centres may cause problems and endanger the peace process. Therefore, the continued commitment and determination of the Government of Angola and UNITA are required so as to bring the peace process to a successful conclusion.

The United Nations and the international community at large should remain engaged in supporting the people of Angola in overcoming the challenges they have to face today. My delegation has carefully examined the progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III). We welcome the recommendation of the Secretary-General to the Security Council to approve the extension of the mandate of UNAVEM III until 30 June 1997 and the establishment as from 1 July of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (UNOMA). We believe that an Observer Mission will help the people of Angola consolidate the process of national reconciliation with s view to creating conditions conducive to political stability and economic and social recovery.

Once again, we would like to reiterate our appreciation to the all those contributing towards the attainment of an enduring peace in Angola, thus bringing about a conducive environment for development not only in Angola, but in the whole region of southern Africa. We would like to thank particularly the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Blondin Beye, the observer countries and troop-contributing nations.

The President: I thank the representative of Mozambique for his very kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Cameroon. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mpay (Cameroon)(*interpretation from French*): First of all let me say, Mr. President, how pleased the delegation of Cameroon is to see you presiding over the Security Council at a time when Angola, which has long-standing historical ties to Portugal, has entered a decisive stage in the process of peace, unity and national reconciliation. We are sure that under your presidency, the Council's work will be successful. We also congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Zbigniew Maria Wlosowicz of Poland, on the excellent work he accomplished as President of the Council last month.

We reiterate to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, the appreciation of Cameroon and Africa as a whole for his tireless efforts for peace in the world since he has been at the head of the Organization.

(spoke in English)

I am speaking also in my capacity as representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

I wish to take this opportunity to express the deep appreciation of the Organization of African Unity for the encouraging report (S/1997/304) of 14 April 1997, submitted to the Council on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III).

Recent developments - the approval by the National Assembly of legislation concerning the special status of the President of UNITA, the swearing in of the UNITA deputies and the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation - are historic steps in the direction of peace, stability and national reconciliation. These developments are great because a window of opportunity for peace has been opened for the people of Angola, who have long endured pain, suffering and the ravages of a fratricidal war.

In the light of these new developments in Angola, the OAU congratulates the Angolan Government and UNITA on their vision and determination to enhance the unity and reconciliation of the people of Angola. The OAU also congratulates the United States, Portugal, the Russian Federation and other countries for their steadfastness, commitment and resolve to assist the parties in arriving at this new day in Angola. To the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Maître Alioune Blondin Beye, the OAU extends its deep appreciation for the relentless efforts they have exerted and continue to exert to bring about lasting peace in that troubled sister country.

The OAU shares the view that as much of the international community welcomes these encouraging developments, there is much more that needs to be done to consolidate and build upon this manifestation of goodwill by UNITA and the Government of Angola. In this regard, therefore, the international community and all who have played some part in the establishment of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation have a moral and political obligation to stay engaged in the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

The reasons for staying engaged are too obvious to mention. But if there is one reason why we should all stay engaged, it is that an uncontrolled fire in your neighbour's house can reach your house if you do not act in time. In other words, there is an imperative that requires Angola to be secure from the crisis at its borders.

The full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol is the objective the OAU and the international community wish to see achieved. In this regard, we must persevere in the task and encourage the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation to resolve all pending issues. If ever there was a time for the international community to stay engaged in Angola, it is now. The international community owes the people of Angola that much, and the OAU enjoins the Security Council also to be engaged until the objective is achieved.

The President: I thank the representative of Cameroon for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Argentina. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Ramírez (Argentina)(*interpretation from Spanish*): As is stated by the Secretary-General in his recent report, the events of the past two weeks in Angola have been very encouraging. The inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation on 11 April 1997 — with the appointment of four Ministers and seven Vice-Ministers from UNITA, the swearing in of 67 of the 70 UNITA deputies in the National Assembly and that body's adoption of the law on the special status of Mr. Jonas Savimbi — allows us to say with deep satisfaction that after more than 20 years, this fratricidal struggle seems finally to have been left behind and there is a sincere commitment to the peace process.

At this crucial time, the people of Angola deserve all our admiration for having, maintained, despite adversity, their faith in a shared goal of peace, liberty, justice and prosperity, and for having stoically endured the sufferings of war. Such faith demands the support of the international community.

A stable and lasting peace inevitably calls for mutual sacrifice and concessions. We therefore appeal once again to both parties to the Angolan conflict not to miss this new and invaluable opportunity, but to work together on the task of consolidating peace by resolving all the issues under the Lusaka Protocol left pending. In this connection, it is essential that the process of unification of the Armed Forces and the National Police be completed, as well as the demobilization of surplus UNITA military personnel. A new and definitive impetus must be given to the task of social reintegration of the ex-combatants, and State administration must be normalized throughout the country.

In this context, we hope that the meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Jonas Savimbi will take place as soon as possible. They cannot avoid this responsibility to the people of Angola.

Our commitment to international peace and security, as well as our friendship for the people of Angola, led to our participation in UNAVEM III. We believe that UNAVEM III has played and will continue to play an important role in the peace process. We therefore support the Secretary-General's recommendation, in his report of 14 April 1997, regarding the need to extend the mandate of UNAVEM III to 30 June 1997.

We would also express our appreciation for the tireless efforts of the United States, the Russian Federation and Portugal to find a peaceful solution to the dispute, as well as for those of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Blondin Beye of the Republic of Mali. We must make special mention of the Secretary-

General's decision to visit Angola and hold a frank, direct and substantive dialogue with President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi.

Finally, Mr. President, on behalf of the delegation of Argentina, I wish to express our deep and sincere appreciation for your initiative in encouraging the holding of formal meetings of the Security Council, which are an essential contribution to the transparency of its work and the legitimacy of its decisions.

The President: I thank the representative of Argentina for her kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Lesotho. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho): I wish to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on behalf of my Government, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. I also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor for his very successful work during the course of the last month.

My delegation warmly welcomes the Secretary General's positive report on Angola and reiterates its appreciation for the efforts of the Special Representative, Maître Blondin Beye. The commitment to and support of both Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Mr. Beye for the peace process in Angola continue to be important catalysts for a new era of peace and economic and social progress in Angola.

When we last addressed this body in February, a goal was set for all parties to show more commitment to the peace process. Our hopes were focused on the swearing in of UNITA deputies and the formation of a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation as a next step in a schedule of goals and timetables voluntarily agreed upon by the Government of Angola and UNITA. While we were encouraged by some of the steps which both parties had taken to restore the momentum for the peace process, we remained pessimistic and expressed our concerns over the delays in implementing the outstanding political and military issues.

Today, we are happy that, more than ever before, the prospects for lasting peace in Angola have been significantly advanced: the approval by the National Assembly of the legislation concerning the special status of the UNITA leader, Mr. Savimbi, the swearing in of UNITA deputies in the National Assembly and the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation on 11 April 1997 are commendable efforts and decisive steps towards the completion and full implementation of other aspects of the Lusaka Protocol.

We commend all the parties for showing commitment and rededicating themselves to peace, stability and prosperity in Angola. Most of all, we congratulate the women and men of Angola for their sacrifices and efforts. Despite various obstacles that threatened the fragile peace process, they never faltered in their quest for peaceful national reconciliation. We share the Secretary-General's hope that tangible and rapid progress can now be made towards completing the implementation of the other aspects of the Lusaka Protocol in the spirit of cooperation and mutual accommodation which both parties have so far demonstrated. We thus remain confident that the Angolan peace process will never again be threatened by procrastination on the part of either party.

Given that the major goal of establishing a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation has now been achieved, the international community should sustain its support for the people of Angola. At this decisive point, an extension of the mandate of UNAVEM III up to 30 June 1997 is necessary to ensure that Angola establishes one army and one police force for one united Angola. My delegation thus welcomes the extension of the mandate of UNAVEM III and supports the transitional arrangements recommended by the Secretary-General in his report contained in document S/1997/304.

The Secretary-General's report indicates that there is still much work that needs to be done before lasting peace and reconciliation can be achieved in Angola. The challenges of integrating UNITA soldiers into the national army and police force and of demobilizing excess personnel still remain to be resolved, as does the thorny issue of deserters and absentees. In the light of the positive developments so far, we urge all the parties to continue to display the political will to build on their goodwill and understanding by cooperating in the remaining tasks leading to a free Angola. The greatest challenge for the newly established Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is to pave the way for free and fair elections by creating the necessary political conditions and infrastructure for free and democratic choice. The continued presence of the international community in Angola in the form of an Observer Mission

after the expiration of the UNAVEM III mandate is thus necessary for post-conflict peace-building purposes.

In conclusion, my delegation expresses its gratitude to the international donor community and the countries of the troika for their valuable support and efforts in assisting the people of Angola as they strive to attain a long-awaited and well-deserved peace.

The President: I thank the representative of Lesotho for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Netherlands. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Biegman (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following associated countries have aligned themselves with this statement: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia. Iceland and Norway have also aligned themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation on 11 April, which marks one of the most important steps in the peace process initiated at Lisbon in 1991 and renewed at Lusaka in 1994, and which sets Angola on the promising path of development for the benefit of all Angolans. We would like to congratulate the Angolan people and express our best wishes to the new Angolan Government for the further consolidation of the peace process. Moreover, we should like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, whose most timely visit to Angola was a major factor in achieving this breakthrough, as well as to his Special Representative, Maître Blondin Beye, and the three observer countries for the indispensable role they have played in the formation of the new Government.

The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), UNITA and the other parties can and must now walk the last mile to the full implementation of the Lusaka accords and national reconciliation together. In view of the extremely difficult road which led to the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, continued confidence-building between its components will be necessary. In this context, an early meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi seems to be an important step. It is also to be borne in mind that much remains to be done in order to achieve the same unity of administration at the provincial and national levels as has been achieved at the central level.

With the establishment of the new Government, the way is now open for the full completion of important tasks such as the normalization of the State administration throughout the national territory and policy discussions with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Rapid progress is called for in the incorporation of UNITA troops into the Angolan army and the National Police, as well as in the area of demobilization. We welcome the launching of the rapid demobilization programme last Saturday. The 27,000 soldiers, who left the quartering areas as deserters and absentees, should return as soon as possible and be demobilized. The outstanding political tasks must now also be completed.

The European Union and its member States have provided significant political, financial, material and personnel support for demining activities in Angola. We hope that the planned transfer of the responsibility for support of the national mine- clearance programme from the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) to the United Nations Development Programme will take place soon in order to secure the future of the programme. We therefore look forward to the early signing of the project document concerning the development of a national mine-clearance capacity in Angola.

We have taken note of the Secretary-General's intention to complete the phased drawdown of UNAVEM's military units by the end of August of this year. At the same time, we feel that the United Nations still has a role to play in support of the peace process. Accordingly, we concur with the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of UNAVEM III until 30 June 1997, on the understanding that the operation would gradually proceed with the transition towards a United Nations observer mission in Angola to be formally established on 1 July 1997. In addition to the completion of the remaining military tasks, the observer mission would focus on political, police and human rights aspects, as well as on humanitarian and public information programmes aimed at consolidating the national reconciliation process. We attach particular importance to the deployment of human rights officers and of police observers, who would monitor compliance with the peace accords, including freedom of movement throughout the country.

Once again, we would like to commend the staff of UNAVEM III, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, who perform their work in often trying conditions. It is important that their safety continue to be assured both at present and during any future United Nations presence in Angola.

During his visit to Angola, the Secretary-General launched the United Nations consolidated appeal for 1997, which includes humanitarian needs as well as a basis for rehabilitation and reconstruction. The new Government can rest assured that its efforts in the reconstruction of a reconciled Angola and in the framework of the peace process will meet with a willingness on the part of the European Union to cooperate actively. With international assistance, a successful consolidation of the peace process and good governance can certainly be achieved.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Zimbabwe. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe): It is with immense delight and rekindled hope that my delegation welcomes the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Angola. I cannot but echo most resoundingly the Secretary-General's observation that

> "Never before has the country been so close to the final resolution of its devastating conflict and to the attainment of lasting peace". *(S/1997/304, para. 17)*

The dramatic events of the past two weeks clearly demonstrate that the people of Angola hold their destiny in their own hands. Crucial steps which had remained glued to the drawing boards and measures which had overstayed their time on the list of things to do have, all of a sudden, made a dramatic transformation and have been inscribed on the list of achievements, real achievements. The regularization of Mr. Savimbi's status, the swearing in of UNITA deputies and the historic inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation have given the people of Angola a firm grip on the reins of peace, and raised our hopes that a new day is dawning in that country — and all this in spite of the litany of past disappointments and failed peace efforts.

Zimbabwe most heartily congratulates the people of Angola on their remarkable steps forward in the peace process. The personal presence of His Excellency the President of Zimbabwe, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, at the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Luanda was an eloquent expression of my country's, and indeed the subregion's, unwavering support for the peace process in Angola, and of our abiding goodwill towards the brotherly people of Angola. It is the earnest hope of the people of the region that Angola's new but achievement-studded calendar heralds a new breath of the spirit of cooperation and mutual accommodation which was the hallmark of the Lusaka accords.

In this regard, we call upon the people of Angola to ride upon this tide of success, goodwill and great expectations, and move expeditiously to conclude the political, military and administrative assignments which they have committed themselves to in order to make lasting peace an irreversible reality in their country.

We look forward to more progress, *inter alia* in the normalization of State administration throughout the entire country, the completion of the formation of the united armed forces and the national police, and the demobilization of the remainder of UNITA's military personnel.

As we look forward to the consolidation of peace in Angola, we in southern Africa will continue to put our full weight behind the efforts to promote that process. Through its chairmanship of the Organization of African Unity Ad Hoc Committee on Angola and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, Zimbabwe will continue to use its good offices to widen the frontiers of peace.

I wish to conclude by stating that we welcome and fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) to 30 June, as well as to create a follow-up mission in the form of a United Nations observer mission in Angola. It is also of crucial importance that the international community undergird the peace-building efforts that must now commence. These should include the post-war reconstruction of the shattered infrastructure and the resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as meeting the daunting challenge of landmine clearance.

We pay tribute to UNAVEM III, to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, to the troika of observers, to the Organization of African Unity and to the countries of the subregion, for their collective and cumulative contributions helped create the requisite quantum leap in the Angola peace process.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Qatar. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar): I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Sir, for convening and presiding over this meeting. At the same time, I would like to take this opportunity to convey through you my thanks to your predecessor, our colleague from Poland.

I have the honour and the pleasure to welcome the formation of the new Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Angola on behalf of the Asian Group and my country. This is truly an important juncture in African history. After decades of civil strife, the people of Angola have come together to establish peace and stability in their country. This peace agreement is a source of pride not only for the African continent, but also for the world as a whole. We hope that it will have far-reaching effects on conflict situations around the world.

In this regard, we call upon the Angolan people to sustain what has been achieved politically and to consolidate it on the basis of peace-building and economic development. To realize this objective, we support the Secretary-General's conviction that the international community should remain engaged in Angola until the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol is achieved.

The success story in Angola would not have been possible without the commitment and the generous contributions of the community of nations. Today we have a new spirit in the difficult task of peace-making and peacekeeping. I am sure that the Secretary-General and his staff spared no effort to achieve this historic accord. For this they deserve our appreciation and continued support until the United Nations fulfils its goals of maintaining peace and security throughout the world, as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: I thank the representative of Qatar for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Peru. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Guillén (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. Allow me also to convey my congratulations to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Poland, Ambassador Wlosowicz.

I am pleased to speak on behalf of the delegation of Peru. I am also expressing the feelings of Latin American and Caribbean countries, which are taking an interest in those meetings on the situation in Angola. It is our wish in particular to welcome the recent inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation of Angola. Over these years we have seen the difficult path that the people of Angola have had to travel in order to reach this important moment. The inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is a fundamental step towards the promise of consolidating peace and democracy to replace the mistrust and violence that have so sorely affected the people of Angola.

We welcome the step taken last March in Lusaka by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. This gave critical impetus to achieving the final agreement between the Angolan parties. The efforts made by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Maître Alioune Blondin Beye, and by all mediating countries have also been notable. All of this has been invaluable to reaching this event.

States Members of the United Nations have been looking forward to this moment because there have been setbacks which have jeopardized the entire process ever since the "Acordos de Paz" were signed in 1991 and the Lusaka Protocol in 1994. The transitional phase about to begin will be difficult, complex and sensitive. It will be vital during this phase to have the firm support and commitment of the parties in carrying out their responsibilities in keeping with the agreements they have entered into.

There is therefore a special responsibility on the parties with regard to the United Nations. The peace, security and development of the Angolan people, who have suffered so much, are rights that we cannot ignore. In this connection, we welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to convert the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) at the end of its mandate into a United Nations observer mission. We believe that what has been attained with such great effort could be lost without this.

Angola urgently requires a process of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Basic needs must be met. The development and training of human resources are particularly essential. We believe that this is a typical

case of the reconstruction of a country. This can only be achieved through the organic, carefully planned efforts and well-integrated efforts of the international community — as various Members of the United Nations and the Secretariat have proposed — in order to consolidate peace and internal security.

We hope that peace in Angola will move the parties involved in conflicts in other parts of Africa to act, because the peoples of this continent are entitled to the right to life and security that we all believe in as individuals and as Members of the United Nations.

The President: I thank the representative of Peru for the kind words he addressed to me. The next speaker is the representative of Botswana. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): Botswana warmly welcomes the recent inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Angola. It is our fervent hope that this momentous political development will set Angola on the road to irreversible peace and stability. The people of Angola have suffered; they have bled and died needlessly for far too long. It is time this unhappy past was banished to the museum of history.

The inauguration marked a new era of hope for a peaceful Angola and a peaceful southern Africa. Peace in Angola is our peace; it is peace for all the nations of southern Africa. The presence of the regional leaders, including my own Head of State, at the inauguration ceremony bears testimony to the regional dimension of the Angolan peace process. Like a human body, the region of southern Africa cannot function or act as one when a part of it is at war with itself.

While the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation was a ceremonial event worth celebrating with due pomp, we should lose sight neither of the fact that the Lusaka Protocol has not yet been completely implemented nor of the fact that it will take a long time to heal the wounds of war and mutual suspicion among Angolans. The absence of the UNITA leader, leader of the largest opposition party, Mr. Jonas Savimbi, from the inauguration ceremony left too much to be desired vis-à-vis the future of the new Government of Angola. Mr. Savimbi cited personal safety as a reason for his absence from the ceremony. Yet there were Heads of State — 11 of them — whose security was assured by the Angolan authorities, and everything went without incident. It can only be deduced that the UNITA leader is suspicious of a Government of which he is supposedly now an integral part. It is our hope that Mr. Savimbi will find it an act of statesmanship and patriotism to relocate to Luanda to take an active part in the arduous task of national reconciliation and reconstruction. The leader of the opposition always has the seat of government as his base, and his real intentions should not be the subject of guesswork.

It is an anomaly that the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is not operational throughout the national territory of Angola. This must be redressed without delay. Equally, we call on the Government to speedily incorporate and integrate UNITA soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces, as well as to complete the demobilization of excess combatants. And we fully support the call contained in the present draft resolution for a meeting between the President of Angola and the leader of UNITA to iron out these problems.

God has endowed Angola with abundant natural resources for its people to share and by which they can prosper together. The remaining political and military problems should not be allowed to stand in the way of the Angolan people's enjoyment of their natural heritage in peace and harmony.

The international community has stood by the people of Angola in their hour of darkest need. We are happy that they are not about to be abandoned. The provision in the present draft resolution for a follow-on United Nations presence after the withdrawal of UNAVEM III is a clear indication that the international community will continue to be ready to help the Angolans to live with one another as one nation bound by a common destiny. This will take some time, as I have already indicated, but the onus rests upon the people of Angola themselves to abandon mistrust and mutual suspicion lest the international community's resolve to help them weakens and withers away before total peace is achieved in that country. Angola is one of the most beautiful countries of southern Africa, and we cannot afford to have it destroyed with reckless abandon.

Mr. Somavía (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Angola is an historic milestone that the Government of Chile welcomes, together with the entire international community.

We must recognize that on those occasions when the parties did not take the necessary steps called for by the

international community, we often felt that frustration was dominating over good wishes. But finally expectations have been met, and we would like to congratulate all Angolans on this major step. They are the winners. It is the people of Angola who are triumphant, and this should now give them the strength needed to embark on a new phase in their history — that of development, progress and reconciliation.

I would like to take this opportunity to address the representative of Angola, who is here in the Council Chamber, and to tell him that we congratulate him on his new status as representative of the new Government of Unity and National Reconciliation of Angola. From now on, through the will of the parties, he and his delegation are representing at the United Nations all of the people of Angola. We wish him every success in this new phase.

The Secretary-General has noted that it will take a long time to do the great deal that remains to be done in Angola, starting with the completion of pending issues of the Lusaka Protocol. We should not let the success of the past few weeks blind us to the difficulties which still exist.

We believe that it is essential that the new Government of Angola, headed by President Dos Santos, should strengthen its internal ties. National reconciliation — and many countries know through experience the difficulties and complexities of this — is the priority task and perhaps the most crucial in the long run. This will be the main source of stability in the future, but it is also the most difficult. It takes time to bury hatred; it takes time to forgive others; it takes time to acknowledge one's own mistakes.

That is why close cooperation between President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi seems so indispensable. This is the time to build everlasting bonds of mutual trust between them and between their teams. The image of unity, and actual unity, is the best gift that both can give to their people. Let peace begin with peace in the hearts of the leaders. For this to happen Mr. Savimbi would personally have to join in the political dialogue at the highest level.

The future lies in the hands of the people of Angola. However, the Angolan people, their Government of Unity and National Reconciliation and the many friends of Angola must remain vigilant, and ensure that the international community does not leave them alone on the new path that they are treading. The United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) is concluding one phase, but the United Nations must continue to support the consolidation of the peace process.

For all these reasons, my delegation will support the draft resolution through which the Security Council will extend the mandate of UNAVEM III for the last time, and will express its intention to consider the continuation of the United Nations presence in Angola following the withdrawal of UNAVEM III by sending an observer mission.

With regard to Angola's present situation, we should like to note that the delegation of Chile has on numerous occasions reiterated its concern over what happens after peacekeeping operations come to an end — precisely the time at which the great challenges of consolidating peace and starting on the road to reconstruction, economic and social development and reconciliation arise.

We believe that this is an excellent opportunity to try to ensure that the United Nations observer mission in Angola proposed by the Secretary-General will cooperate with the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in these matters, so as to ensure a smooth and safe transition.

However, if all goes well in the near future, Angola will cease to be an item on the agenda of the Security Council, although it will not cease to be in our minds or lose the support of the United Nations system. However, there is always a danger: in other cases we have seen how, once a crisis is over, agreements have been reached and peace restored, international political interest in the next phase — that of development and national reconciliation — quickly falls off. It is as if the Security Council were saying, "Goodbye and good luck. All the best". Of course, a general appeal is made to international community, and, in particular, consolidated humanitarian appeals are made in support of the country. But there is no regular follow-up of developments in the country that was the subject of such great political attention in the Security Council — in this Chamber. Instead, ad hoc groups are set up to follow the situation in the country.

I believe that we need to think about this matter. Perhaps the Economic and Social Council could have the task of taking on countries emerging from a crisis, once they are off the Security Council's agenda, accompanying them as they go through their new phase, coordinating in an appropriate manner the support of the international

community and, above all, keeping political interest in the issues alive.

We fully support the idea that the activities of the future United Nations observer mission in Angola should focus mainly on pending military issues, political matters, the police, human rights, humanitarian programmes and support for the process of national reconciliation. However, it is also important to include the objectives of economic and social development, to which the United Nations could contribute in this delicate process.

Finally, allow me to thank all the men and women who have participated in UNAVEM for the very valuable work that they have done in support of peace in Angola. We should like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan; his predecessor, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali; and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alioune Blondin Beye; as well as the Governments of Portugal, the United States and the Russian Federation for their mediation efforts; the entire United Nations system; the humanitarian agencies on the ground; and, in particular, the long-suffering people of Angola, who are now seeing a new dawn.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Portugal.

As the representative of the Netherlands has already done on behalf of the European Union, Portugal welcomes the recent developments in the political situation in Angola. The Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, and the swearing-in ceremony of the UNITA members of Parliament, are paving the way for a successful conclusion of the Angolan peace process.

As the Secretary-General stated in his progress report on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III), last week's events could well become a milestone in the history of Angola. The Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is a fundamentally important political confidence-building measure. We look forward to all members of that Government working together towards the unity of Angola and the reconciliation of the Angolan people. In fact, the Government will be an essential tool in facilitating the implementation of the remaining tasks of the peace process.

Being close to peace does not necessarily translate into a consolidated peace. We must not deceive ourselves: peace and prosperity are now within reach of all Angolans, but they cannot yet be taken for granted. The remains of the past still persist in Angola, and it is crucial to learn from mistakes. Therefore, the message we must now send to all Angolans, and in particular to those who have subscribed to the peace agreements, is a very simple one: they must believe in the peace process and act accordingly, with an open heart, an open mind, and without any misgivings.

In this context, a meeting within the territory of Angola between President José Eduardo dos Santos and Mr. Jonas Savimbi would show the international community that the political situation in that country is really changing for the better. We hope that the recent approval by the National Assembly of the special status of Mr. Savimbi will facilitate that long-awaited meeting.

Other vitally important steps include the completion of the remaining military aspects of the peace process, including the selection and incorporation of UNITA soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces and demobilization, and the extension of State administration throughout the national territory. Portugal urges the Government and UNITA to complete those tasks expeditiously. They must go that extra mile for peace. We want to believe that such steps will be taken, but the Security Council will have to remain actively seized of the matter to ensure that they are.

Portugal considers national reconciliation to mean not only national unity, but national unity in a democracy. These targets must not be separated. A vibrant democracy is a precondition for peace and stability, and these elements will enable the international community to assist the economic rehabilitation of Angola.

Peace, prosperity and democracy are the separate threads that will unite Angola in a joint destiny. My country is ready to maintain its assistance programmes in the political, social, economic and humanitarian fields, so long as they result from the will of the Angolan Government. For the same reasons, we also welcome the United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for Angola, covering the period from January to December 1997. My delegation also associates itself with the statement made earlier by the European Union, stressing its willingness to cooperate actively in the reconstruction of a reconciled Angola.

Looking ahead, the Portuguese Government fully agrees with the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the Council approve the extension of UNAVEM's

mandate until 30 June 1997, on the understanding that the operation would proceed gradually towards an observer mission which would focus basically on political, humanitarian and human rights aspects. We also share his view that the international community should remain engaged in Angola until the goal of the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol is achieved.

Allow me also to underline the importance of the recent visit of the Secretary-General to Angola, which injected new vigour into the process, strengthening the remarkable efforts made by his Special Representative, Maître Beye, supported by the observer countries. The results of his visit are evident.

Portugal has consistently argued, in international forums and in its bilateral contacts, against direct and indirect military intervention in Angola. Respect for the sovereignty of States is a cardinal principle of Portuguese foreign policy. The Angolan people paid a very heavy toll for these interventions. Therefore, we call upon the Angolans to proceed in such a way as to contribute always to regional peace and stability.

Before concluding, I must state the obvious: the present situation in Angola offers the Angolan people the prospect of a fresh start; but it also constitutes a new challenge to its collective will and determination. Recent events have shown that the seeds of peace which were sown with the agreements signed in Lisbon and by the Lusaka Protocol will finally bear fruit.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The representative of Angola has asked to speak. I now call on him.

Mr. Van Dunem "Mbinda" (Angola): I will be very brief. My delegation begs your indulgence, Mr. President, to speak again because there is some speculation regarding the alleged official involvement of the Angolan Government in the Zaire conflict. Some members of this Council this morning, and others this afternoon, mentioned the question of Zaire. That is why we feel compelled to provide clarification to this body.

From the very beginning of the civil unrest in Zaire, the Angolan Government pleaded for its rapid resolution and appealed very strongly to the parties involved to choose the negotiating table as a means to settle their differences. We also wish to state that this is an internal matter and it is up to the Zairians themselves to find the appropriate solution in order to restore peace and security without any external interference.

Angola has a long record of joining all efforts carried out regionally in order to resolve and prevent conflicts on our continent due to their disastrous consequences for the stability of countries and the well-being of other peoples.

As is well known — and this Council shares these views — the involvement and contributions of the Angolan Government in Sao Tome and Principe have helped restore the interrupted democracy and the State machinery. We have never been involved in any way whatsoever in other countries' internal affairs.

Therefore, we strongly oppose and reject the latest reports suggesting Angola's interference in the internal affairs of Zaire. We would also like to remind this body that there were well-known border-crossing activities before July and August 1975, including the naked intervention of the Zairian Government alongside the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FMLA), to prevent the proclamation of independence of Angola. Everyone also knows of the Zairian Government's support for UNITA to fight against the Government of Angola ever since Angola became independent, and everyone knows of the resolutions of this body asking for non-interference by Zaire in Angolan internal affairs. This Council has the sustainable proof of this blatant interference.

The Government of Angola does not think that this is the time to raise these questions about the Zairian civil conflict, because the Council is seized of the Angolan peace process, in which everyone — international public opinion and the Angolan people in particular — is congratulating himself on the victory achieved up to now. We ask the Council to stick to the Angolan question and leave the question of Zaire, as it is an internal conflict of that country.

The President: It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution (S/1997/316) before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Chile, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, France, Guinea-Bissau, Japan, Kenya, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1106 (1997).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.3770

Security Council

Fifty-second Year

Provisional

3770th Meeting

Wednesday, 23 April 1997, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Monteiro	(Portugal)
Members:	Chile	Mr. Somavía
	China	Mr. Wang Xuexian
	Costa Rica	Mr. Sáenz Biolley
	Egypt	Mr. Elaraby
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Cabral
	Japan	Mr. Owada
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Poland	Mr. Wlosowicz
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Sweden	Mr. Osvald
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston
	United States of America	Mr. Richardson

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

97-85458 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Ethiopia, Italy, Kuwait, the Netherlands and Tunisia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mohammed (Ethiopia), Mr. Fulci (Italy), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Berteling (Netherlands) and Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/1997/324, which contains the text of a letter dated 16 April 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the text of resolution 5638, of 31 March 1997, adopted at the one hundred and seventh regular session of the Council of the League of Arab States, entitled "The situation in Somalia".

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: It has been more than four years since the Security Council adopted resolution 794 (1992), when the humanitarian situation in Somalia demanded the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force to create a climate propitious for humanitarian assistance. Today, more than two years after the withdrawal of the force from Somalia, this meeting provides an opportunity to take stock of developments in Somalia, to exchange views and to conduct consultations on the measures the international community should take in order to promote the establishment of a central authority that enjoys the support of all Somali factions so that the people of Somalia may find stability and begin a life of prosperity and development. In that connection, Mr. President, I would like to thank you very sincerely for having taken the initiative to convene this meeting. I hope that the Council will continue to conduct such meetings in the future.

Despite the humanitarian nature of the intervention of the United Nations in Somalia and the deployment of an international force under Chapter VII of the Charter because of the exceptional circumstances in Somalia at that time - most importantly the absence of a central Government that could extend its authority to the entire country - the humanitarian tragedy and the continuation of the civil war have claimed many innocent victims. While the United Nations has been successful in its humanitarian intervention, it has been less successful with the establishment of local political and social institutions capable of taking over for the State institutions destroyed in the civil war.

The situation today in Somalia differs radically from the situation that prevailed in the past. Numerous regional initiatives have led to many positive developments, the first of which was the Nairobi meeting last October. I would like, in that connection, to thank the Government of Kenya for taking that important initiative, particularly since Mr. Hussein Aidid participated in that meeting alongside other Somali factions. Ethiopian mediation too was successful in organizing the Sodere meeting in which more than 26 factions participated, and which concluded with the establishment of the National Salvation Council. During February and March, the Italian Special Envoy, Mr. Cassini, was able to organize two meetings between Mr. Ali Mahdi Mohamed and Mr. Hussein Aidid, and efforts are under way to have Mr. Osman Atto participate in the consultations so that the reunification of Mogadishu can be achieved and the airport and port of the capital can be opened.

Other developments in Somalia were the participation of the National Salvation Council in the session of the League of Arab States last March, and the issuance of the Sodere documents. This led to the declaration of the Arab League that it would finance, with the voluntary contributions of its members, the holding of a national reconciliation conference in Bossaso as well as the necessary assistance for mediation efforts within Somalia.

The report of the Secretary-General contains important proposals, and the Egyptian delegation hopes that they will be given serious consideration. They include the designation of a new Special Envoy and upgrading the size and role of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia. There are a number of options to choose from, and at present Egypt supports the Secretary-General sending a Special Envoy to Somalia on a mission similar to that of Ambassador Chrétien, who has been in the Great Lakes region in the past few months. The new Special Envoy should be sent with a view to establishing contacts with the Somali war lords and the representatives of the Somali people, and perhaps also in order to visit neighbouring States and other interested States and to consult with competent regional organizations with a view to presenting a comprehensive report to the Secretary-General on measures to be taken, at which time the Security Council could consider them and adopt an appropriate resolution.

The outcome of recent initiatives and consultations on Somalia indicates that there are positive trends which must be exploited, because it is unacceptable for the present state of affairs to continue. It is necessary now to reach an agreement on the nature of the United Nations role in Somalia. The delegation of Egypt calls for a substantial modification of this role, and it calls upon the international community, represented here, to assume its responsibilities vis-à-vis the Somali people. This is why we consider that serious thought needs to be given to a new United Nations initiative to help define the character of further initiatives which the United Nations might take in this area.

I hope it is clear that such action can in no way replace any local or individual initiatives. It can only be complementary to such initiatives, and it should pursue specific objectives. It should emphasize United Nations support for regional efforts and push the factions to participate in such efforts. It should take account of the positions of neighbouring States, other interested States and competent regional and international organizations, with a view to recommending to the Secretary-General measures to be taken. We should be wary of violations of the embargo on arms shipments to Somalia, which was adopted in Security Council resolution 733 (1992). And it should reaffirm the United Nations commitment to a peaceful settlement of the crisis.

Egypt underscores the importance of stability in Somalia both in the light of the strong historical, cultural and other links between Somalia and our country — which extend back to the sixteenth century B.C. — and because Somalia is a fellow Arab and African country. In March Cairo welcomed a delegation of the National Salvation Council, and, last week, Mr. Hussein Aidid. We will continue to maintain contacts with all the factions and representatives of the Somali people without exception in order to support the national reconciliation effort. We reaffirm that Egypt does not oppose other initiatives, because all international and regional initiatives are complementary and pursue a common goal: the achievement of national reconciliation. Egypt will also continue to provide humanitarian and cultural assistance to all regions of Somalia. Because of the appearance of cholera and malnutrition, it is extremely important to respond to humanitarian needs in Somalia, and the international community must provide assistance.

The efforts of the United Nations and of regional and international organizations to support national reconciliation depend on a number of considerations, the most important of which is that the international community must not recognize any authority in Somalia that does not represent all factions of the Somali people. Secondly, the embargo on arms shipments should be respected and strictly monitored. The Somali factions must be persuaded to examine all the options open to them so that they can select the best and most appropriate. The international community must continue all necessary humanitarian and development assistance to all regions of Somalia without exception. The territorial integrity of Somalia and the principle of non-intervention in its internal affairs must be respected.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm that the main responsibility for stability in Somalia rests with the Somali people themselves. But at the same time, we must recognize that it is important and necessary for the United Nations to play a role and to make efforts to assist the Somali people in overcoming the present crisis.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): A year ago, during the last open Security Council debate on Somalia, the situation in that country seemed heartbreaking. The reconciliation process was a dead letter, the nation was coming apart, the humanitarian situation was deteriorating daily. We wondered whether the international community could undertake something it had never done before. Regional initiatives seemed to provide the only hope for re-launching the peace efforts.

For a year now it has indeed been the regional initiatives that have taken the lead in making it possible to progress towards a resumption of negotiations among

the Somali factions. We must pay a tribute to these efforts, in particular those of Ethiopia, Kenya, Egypt and the relevant regional organizations. We also appreciate the activities of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, as well as those of the Special Envoy of the European Community, Mr. Elling, and those of the Italian representative, Mr. Cassini. We also pay a tribute to those who are working in Somalia, under difficult circumstances, to provide assistance to the Somali population.

The resumption of negotiations among Somalis is encouraging. This process can be successful only if all Somali parties participate in it, which is as yet not the case. The international community must try to convince Somali leaders that there is no alternative to negotiations to achieve national reconciliation. This effort must involve in particular those who might be tempted by the idea of secession. As is the case throughout Africa, the maintenance of the territorial integrity and national unity of Somalia is essential to any settlement.

At the moment, the best chances for progress lie with the continued efforts of States of the region, of other interested States and of regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States and the Intergovernmental Authority for Development, based in Nairobi. Strengthening the United Nations role does not seem possible unless it is very gradual — and unless it is accepted by the Somali leaders, who must demonstrate that they sincerely want to participate in negotiations to achieve national reconciliation.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): China supports and welcomes the Council's holding of an open debate on the question of Somalia. We hope that this debate will enable the international community to focus more attention on the question of Somalia; facilitate the efforts of the parties concerned, led by African countries, to resolve the Somali question; and help the factions in Somalia to work more actively to find a political settlement in the interest of national reconciliation and peace.

We have noted with pleasure the positive changes that have taken place in Somalia in recent months. We appreciate the efforts made by the factions concerned in Somalia to achieve reconciliation through political consultations. China has always held that the settlement of the Somali question will ultimately depend on the Somali people themselves and that national reconciliation is the only way out for the Somali people. As a Somali saying goes, "Only dialogue can bring about consensus". We hope that the various factions in Somalia will seek national reconciliation through fraternal dialogue and establish a broadly based coalition government.

The leaders of various factions in Somalia should realize that the African continent is entering a new historical period of seeking peace, stability and development. Somalia has, by comparison, fallen behind. Years of civil war have already seriously hurt the country; further fighting will only aggravate its backwardness. The Chinese Government and people feel saddened by this situation. We believe that peace among the factions in Somalia will benefit their country, while fighting will hurt them all. It is now high time to beat swords into ploughshares.

Over a period of time, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and some African countries have made positive and useful endeavours to promote political consultations and negotiations among the factions in Somalia. We express our deep admiration for the determination of these organizations, and particularly the African countries, to seek strength through unity and to resolve problems in their region. China welcomes and supports these efforts and calls on the factions in Somalia to cooperate closely with them. At the same time, we hold that these efforts should also receive firm and effective support and cooperation from the international community, including the United Nations.

The United Nations, particularly this Council, has the responsibility, and ought to take measures, to contribute constructively to the settlement of the Somali question. In this connection, we are of the view that the role of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia should be strengthened and that this Council should consider positively the Secretary-General's recommendations, made in his report (S/1997/135) of 17 February 1997, to designate a Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on the question of Somalia, to send a United Nations/OAU joint fact-finding mission and to establish a Secretary-General's trust fund.

In conclusion, we call on the international community to give more attention to the question of Somalia and actively to help find a proper solution. The Chinese Government is ready to work together with other parties to this end.

Sir John Weston (United Kingdom): The conflict in Somalia has certainly gone on for far too long. But it is not fair to say, in our view, that the international community has forgotten Somalia. Numerous efforts have been made to bring the warring factions together. We welcome the part played by the Organization of African Unity, by the Arab League, by the European Union, by Egypt and by Italy. We attach particular importance to the regional efforts led by Kenya and Ethiopia. The Ethiopian-sponsored Sodere declaration and the Kenyan-sponsored Nairobi agreement can play a vital role in laying the foundations on which a political settlement can eventually be built. But it is important that the Nairobi and Sodere agreements are seen as complementary to each other. Participation of all the Somali parties, including those in the north-west, is necessary for the process of reconciliation to stand any chance of success.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Security Council have also shown their concern about the continuing conflict in Somalia and their support for regional and other efforts to initiate a political dialogue. In February the Secretary-General issued a report calling for more resources for humanitarian relief and rehabilitation in Somalia, expressing support for regional efforts to achieve a political settlement and calling on all States to comply with the arms embargo. In response, the Security Council issued a presidential statement firmly backing the approach set out by the Secretary-General. At its fifty-third session, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights also issued a statement welcoming regional efforts to promote a political dialogue.

In the light of the efforts being made by Kenya, Ethiopia and others, we ourselves see no need for a new initiative on Somalia at this point. But it is vital to ensure that these various efforts are properly coordinated and fully complementary with each other.

This is also the moment to recall that none of these efforts can succeed unless the leaders of the various parties in Somalia show the necessary political will. The main responsibility for achieving national reconciliation and for restoring peace rests with them. Here I agree with what my Chinese colleague has just said.

Finally, I would like to say a word about the humanitarian situation. The recent drought highlights the continuing need for humanitarian assistance. The United Kingdom has contributed £54 million to humanitarian relief in Somalia since 1991. We shall continue to do what we can to alleviate the situation there. But successful relief operations require the cooperation of the parties on the ground, including security, freedom of movement and the opening of seaports and airports. We have been concerned to hear of the problems which humanitarian agencies have encountered in Mogadishu and elsewhere. All the parties in that country have an obligation not only to step up their efforts to achieve peace, but also to ensure that the valuable work of the humanitarian agencies is not impeded. The leaders of those parties must stop jockeying for power and concentrate on the needs of the people they are supposed to represent.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): Allow me first to thank the President of the Security Council for convening the first open debate on Somalia in over a year. We believe that today's meeting provides an important opportunity to refocus the attention of the international community on Somalia and to deliver a clear message to the Somali people that their plight is not forgotten, but is being actively addressed by the international community.

Since the last open debate in March 1996, there have been some positive developments in the Somali peace process: the leaders of three major factions were brought together in Nairobi last year; the two faction leaders in the Mogadishu area have met several times since last January to discuss the restoration of peace to the capital city; and most importantly, the leaders of 26 factions gathered at Sodere, Ethiopia, and took an important step towards the creation of a broad-based national government last January.

In this regard, we would like to pay tribute to the various concerned Governments and organizations that continue to contribute their invaluable energy and effort to furthering the peace process. Our special thanks go to the Governments of Kenya, Ethiopia, Egypt and Italy, the Organization of African Unity, the European Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the League of Arab States.

Despite this progress, the remainder of the journey to reconciliation and peace in Somalia is likely to be as unpredictable and arduous as it has been so far. Although the Sodere meeting was a significant step forward, it was overshadowed by the conspicuous non-participation of Mr. Aidid and Mr. Egal, who continue to disagree with the goals of the meeting and the process of reconciliation which it has launched.

Another cause for concern is the exclusion of Mr. Osman Atto from the meeting of the faction leaders

in Mogadishu. All things considered, the main stumbling block in the peace process remains unchanged: the intransigence of the major faction leaders.

We believe, therefore, that if further progress is to be made in the Somali peace process, the international community, and the regional peacemakers in particular, should focus on achieving two tasks: first, Aidid and Egal need to be brought on board in the Sodere peace process; and secondly, the three Mogadishu leaders need to be brought together to reach agreement on the restoration of stability to the capital and its vicinity. In this context, my delegation urges Mr. Aidid and Mr. Egal, in unambiguous terms, to put aside their parochial ambitions and join the National Reconciliation Conference at Bossaso, scheduled for 10 June.

In our view, the Security Council should play a proactive role in the Somali peace process in close coordination with regional efforts. It was in this context that my delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals for action by the Council, as contained in his report of February 1997. Those proposals, we believe, must be continuously followed up and put into action in accordance with the evolving situation in Somalia. In this connection, we recognize and support the important role that the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) has played in monitoring the situation and facilitating dialogue among the parties concerned. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's decision to extend the mandate of UNPOS.

On the humanitarian front, the international community should be mindful of the ever present threat of a deterioration in conditions and stand ready to respond to emergencies. However, relief activities can only be effectively carried out by the international community if they enjoy the full cooperation of the Somali factions. In this regard, my delegation is deeply concerned at the continuation of acts of violence against humanitarian personnel of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. We strongly condemn such acts of violence and urge the Somali factions to guarantee the safety and freedom of movement of all aid workers.

Finally, we would like to emphasize the responsibility of the international community to ensure the implementation of the arms embargo on Somalia, as established by resolution 733 (1992). We are certain that all of us present in this Chamber share the view that the illegal flow of arms is clearly a serious destabilizing factor in the Somali situation and that the easy availability of arms undermines the chances of political settlement. As Chairman of the Sanctions Committee for Somalia, I regret to note that, despite the best efforts of the Committee, this problem could not be addressed in an effective manner, as desired by the international community.

My delegation would like to suggest that at an appropriate moment the Security Council seriously re-examine how to improve the effectiveness of the arms embargo regime as a whole. Otherwise, allowing embargo violations to continue unchecked might not only damage the Council's credibility, but also render meaningless all the efforts to achieve peace. We believe that the Security Council, beyond merely urging compliance, should now explore further concrete measures to enhance the embargo's effectiveness.

In closing, we would like to reiterate the consistent view of the Republic of Korea that the ultimate responsibility for realizing peace and reconciliation lies with the Somali people themselves, and that there is little that the international community can do unless the Somali leaders show the political will and commitment necessary to achieve a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

My delegation hopes that today's debate will bring forth many constructive views and suggestions on the situation in Somalia and that the conclusions we reach will be duly followed up by the Security Council and the Secretariat.

Mr. Owada (Japan): After many years of intense internal strife, the situation in Somalia remains a source of grave international concern. The failure of all the various factions to join together in the search for a comprehensive and lasting settlement continues to rob the people of Somalia of the right to pursue their livelihoods and embark on the long process of national reconciliation and reconstruction.

Ongoing, sincere efforts by a number of countries and international organizations are beginning to show some promise, however. We were particularly encouraged by the opening of talks in Nairobi last October among three faction leaders — Hussein Aidid, Ali Mahdi Mohamed and Osman Atto — at the initiative of President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya. In this connection, however, it is to be noted with great regret that Mr. Atto has been excluded from the talks, which have continued since the beginning of this month in Mogadishu, within the framework of a joint commission

on reconciliation. My delegation believes that, as the leader of an important faction, Mr. Atto's participation is crucial to the advancement of the comprehensive peace process.

Another encouraging step forward is the High-level Consultative Meeting of Somali Political Movements, which was convened in Sodere in January on the initiative of Ethiopia. One significant result of that effort was the formation of the National Salvation Council, which has decided to convene a National Reconciliation Conference in June this year.

My Government also wishes to express its gratitude to Egypt for its recent effort, on behalf of the League of Arab States, to bring the leaders of rival factions together. We also pay tribute to Italy for the contributions it has made, through its Special Envoy, to advancing the peace process. The United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) is also to be commended for the vital role it has been playing as a liaison between the United Nations and the various factions and in encouraging the leaders of those factions to seek a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

Each of these endeavours is a necessary and valuable contribution; they do not by themselves, however, add up to a comprehensive solution. What is essential is that the Somali faction leaders now summon the political will to join together and meld these separate efforts into a unified drive to achieve a comprehensive and lasting settlement. The international community should redouble its efforts to induce the faction leaders to do so, and in particular to induce Mr. Hussein Aidid, the leader of a faction that claims to control most of the country, to enter into negotiations with all parties. Japan, for its part, is prepared to cooperate in such mediation efforts.

Demanding our urgent attention under the present circumstances is the humanitarian dimension of the situation in Somalia. In many parts of the country, and especially in the area around Mogadishu, indiscriminate acts of violence continue to jeopardize the safety of the civilian population, as well as that of United Nations personnel and others engaged in international humanitarian relief efforts. We in the international community should call upon the faction leaders to abide strictly by international humanitarian law and other norms in the humanitarian field, and control the actions of their subordinates, in order to guarantee the safety and human rights of civilians, as well as the freedom of movement of international relief workers. We should also urge them to cooperate in reopening the seaport and airport of Mogadishu in order to facilitate the delivery of much-needed food and medical supplies.

It is important that the international community extend full support and assistance to the process of national reconstruction and rehabilitation once a comprehensive peace settlement is achieved. Japan, for its part, in 1996 contributed $1.7 million to the World Food Programme to assist internally affected people in Somalia and 700 thousand Swiss francs to the International Committee of the Red Cross for its activities for Somalia. When stability is restored throughout the country, it will be ready to extend social and economic development assistance as well.

It bears repeating that the achievement of a lasting and comprehensive peace ultimately depends on the leaders of the Somali people themselves. Only when all the factions set aside their rivalries and join together to advance the peace process can the people of Somalia turn their efforts to rebuilding their nation. Japan strongly hopes that they will be given the opportunity to do so in the near future. When they do, they may be assured that their efforts will have the strong and willing support of the international community.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian Federation has consistently favoured the achievement of a comprehensive, lasting political settlement and national reconciliation in Somalia. An effective, peaceful settlement of this protracted conflict is possible only through the further development of the negotiating process to include all the main Somali factions and groups and through establishing a broadly representative Government on that basis.

We are pleased to note the definite progress made in establishing a dialogue among the Somalis. This was achieved recently through the energetic mediation efforts of regional organizations and neighbouring and other interested States. We would like to underscore in particular the role personally played by the President of Kenya, Mr. Arap Moi.

Some promising results came out of the recent consultations in Cairo with the leaders of the prominent Somali factions. Judging from available information, there are grounds to expect that the results of these consultations may promote an expansion of the basis for the dialogue among Somalis.

The political support of the United Nations for regional mediation efforts will continue in the future to be an important factor to strengthen and stimulate efforts to achieve a Somali settlement. However, we concur with the view that Somali people bear the main responsibility for the restoration of peace and normal living conditions in their country. It is precisely their willingness to espouse the logic of peace and to find generally accepted solutions that in the final analysis will determine the success of any mediation effort.

This applies fully to the need for the Somali factions to ensure appropriate security conditions for the operations of international humanitarian organizations. We support efforts to provide humanitarian assistance and support for the rehabilitation of Somalia drawing upon the capacities of the United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Somalia and on the basis of coordinated efforts with other international organizations in this sphere.

It is also important to ensure unfaltering compliance with the international embargo on deliveries of weapons to Somalia, for which the Security Council has made repeated appeals. We support the proposal of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to find ways and means to enhance the effectiveness of the embargo regime, including through the strengthening of coordination in the Security Council committee on the embargo against Somalia.

Mr. Somavía (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): There has been an empty seat in the General Assembly for several years, the seat of Somalia. The people of Somalia is not represented and cannot make its voice heard in the United Nations system due to the failure of its leaders to agree. This is also the reason why it is not present at this debate. This situation reflects what is occurring on the ground itself. Somalia is a country divided into factions in which not even the United Nations can keep a resident office and in which humanitarian agencies frequently face serious problems in carrying out their assistance programmes. These, as we all know, include their personnel being the victims of incidents and violence.

A little over a year ago, in March 1996, we were meeting in this Chamber in an open debate on the situation in Somalia. At that time the tone of the statements was generally one of pessimism and uncertainty. However, beginning at the end of last year we began to receive somewhat more encouraging news. A process of consultations which began in Nairobi and continued in Sodere has been bearing fruit. The Sodere declarations of January 1997 established the National Salvation Council. If all goes well, there will be a conference on Somali national reconciliation in June.

This entire process is obviously affected by the reluctance of two leaders, Mr. Hussein Aidid and Mr. Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, to join it. Despite this, the members of the National Salvation Council met recently in Cairo with representatives of the League of Arab States, which stands ready to help in convening the June conference.

From Europe, Italy has for a long time been concerned about the situation in Somalia, and the work of its representative in Mogadishu has had its successes. For all these reasons, we would like to pay tribute to the Governments of Kenya, Ethiopia, Egypt and Italy and to the League of Arab States and the European Union. We should include the efforts of the Organization of African Unity and the Organization of the Islamic Conference among those that have been carried out by the international community to promote the future of the Somali people.

We also underscore the work carried out by the Secretary-General and by the United Nations Political Office for Somalia in Nairobi. But above all we congratulate those in Somalia who have decided to work together to ensure that Somalia will again become a respected nation at peace. These are positive signs that we did not have before us a year ago.

We must reiterate that responsibility in the search for a solution to the political crisis in Somalia rests with Somalis themselves, and particularly with the leaders of the various factions. Most of these leaders are trying to find a way to resolve the situation in their country and are taking steps in that direction with the assistance of friendly countries. However, there are still some who are recalcitrant. Some political leaders are unable to go beyond their personal interests and quest for power to subjugate themselves to the interests of the people whom they claim to represent. These very few leaders should heed the voice of their people, who seek peace and reconciliation. On this occasion they should also heed the voice of the international community, which is willing to support that peace.

Looking at this in historical terms, the Somali political leadership was a victim of the cold war. It tried to play super- Power off against super-Power, switching alliances and loyalties and ultimately finding itself with a

destroyed and underdeveloped country in which few took notice at the international level. In playing cold-war roulette, the country was bankrupted.

Despite the indifference of many, the international community took action. It decided to help restore a degree of order and in particular to avert a massive humanitarian tragedy. The Security Council approved the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), and the humanitarian community set out to alleviate the crisis.

Once again, however, infighting among the leaders stood in the way of a stable United Nations presence, causing a peace mission to be aborted, and the country was left to its own devices.

Once again, we find that the leaders of certain factions are refusing to cooperate in the search for a joint solution. But they are, as always, leading a comfortable existence, while the people who live in the territories that they control are suffering the consequences of their leaders' political intransigence. The leaders' recalcitrant attitude seems to say "Somalia as a country interests me only if I can control it."

The Somalis themselves must determine how to resolve their internal problems. What is important is for the Somalis to be able to coexist peacefully among themselves and with their neighbours by means of a legitimate democratic political organization.

The structures of such an organization must correspond to the characteristics and interests of the Somalis themselves. Whether they wish a centralized government, or one with limited central power, a confederation or a system of clans and subclans, this is a domestic matter that they should be able to resolve among themselves. In other words, the international community is not necessarily pushing a classically Western state model.

In describing possible political organization alternatives, I should like to emphasize a limitation that we believe the United Nations system has in tackling conflicts such as Somalia in a structural way. The Charter of the United Nations emphasizes the role of preventive diplomacy in reaching an agreement among the parties to a conflict. The drafters of the Charter understood that the parties to the conflict would normally be nation-States — in other words, these would be inter-State conflicts.

However, the reality today is that most conflicts that appear on the agenda of the Security Council, such as the one in Somalia, are domestic, and are more like civil wars than conflicts between nations. We have found that, as a result, the instruments of traditional diplomacy are not as effective in such situations. We believe that in the future the Security Council, in order to be truly modern and contemporary, will increasingly have to resort to other sources of experience in settling conflicts. I refer here to experiences that are related more to interpersonal conflicts, to problems of coexistence among different religions or races in the same city or territory, to experiences relating to participation in and the easing of tensions within a community, and to confidence-building among different peoples and groups, rather than among States. There is a great deal of experience available in these areas. Using it is the challenge facing the Council.

Those who still refuse to participate in the peace process must understand that they have a unique opportunity today: to let it be known what type of society they desire. Otherwise, even though many obstacles stand in the way, if, as we hope, the majority of the Somali leaders continue to pursue the peace process, it will move forward with the support of the international community, despite those who oppose it.

Having said this, I should like to express our special concern about the humanitarian situation of the Somalis. This people, and those who wish to help them, must not be subjected to violence and must enjoy security so that they can develop as human beings. This is a point on which the international community cannot compromise. In this connection, we would like to reiterate what we said last year in the Council's debate on Somalia.

Finally, Mr. President, I should like to thank you for your initiative in convening this formal Security Council meeting on the situation in Somalia. This reflects Portugal's interest in expanding public debates, which Chile fully shares. This provides an excellent opportunity to hear delegations that are not members of the Council speak on an item that has long concerned us.

The President: I thank the representative of Chile for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Osvald (Sweden): Later in the debate, the Netherlands will speak on behalf of the European Union. Sweden fully supports that statement.

The armed conflict cannot continue in Somalia. National reconciliation is now necessary and is a prerequisite for sustainable peace and development.

Without reconciliation the humanitarian suffering will continue, and Somalia will remain a destabilizing factor in the region.

The United Nations and the international community as a whole must help Somalia on its way from chaos and suffering to normalization and development. The ultimate responsibility for national reconciliation, however, rests with the Somalis themselves. The Somalis need and deserve leaders who do not act like warlords but like leaders who are prepared to overlook narrow individual ambitions and focus on the national interest.

The ongoing peace efforts, such as the Sodere and Nairobi initiatives, by regional and other interested States and organizations, have the full support of my Government. There is, however, a need for further coordination of the initiatives, leading in the end to an integrated process with the participation of all Somali leaders.

The Somali peace and reconciliation process must ultimately involve all layers of society. While we welcome the latest progress made to achieve a negotiated settlement among Somali factions, we must not forget that the results will not be sustainable unless reconciliation efforts are also focused on rebuilding the civil society on regional and local levels. The European Union and non-governmental organizations such as the Life and Peace Institute make important contributions in this field.

The leading roles played by the regional States and organizations in the resolution of the Somali conflict are commendable. At the same time, Sweden welcomes the preparedness of the United Nations Secretary-General — should he consider it helpful — to designate a Special Envoy for Somalia.

The control of the warlords over the Somali people is based not least on the possession of arms. The United Nations and its Member States must ensure that the arms embargo is adhered to. Violations should be reported and acted upon. Also, international assistance should facilitate demilitarization of Somali society. Demobilization of militias requires that alternative means of subsistence be created.

The international community must sustain its commitment to peace-building in Somalia and not scale down the assistance in a situation which might be less dramatic, but remains extremely fragile. Peace-building and the resolution of humanitarian crises should be seen in a long-term perspective. They must not be reduced to ad hoc interventions.

In the present Somali situation of semi-peace, semi-war, international assistance needs to be closely coordinated within the framework of a shared approach on central issues. In the recent United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal, important steps were taken towards developing such a joint strategy. My Government intends to contribute to this Appeal and encourages others to do the same.

Mr. Sáenz Biolley (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me to express the satisfaction of the Government of Costa Rica at the Security Council's continuing consideration of the case of Somalia, this time by holding a formal meeting in order to approach this subject with the greatest transparency, through the participation of all the States Members of the Organization.

It is true that the evolution of events in Somalia is frequently frustrating and discouraging, but this meeting demonstrates the firm will and steadfast commitment of the United Nations to resolving the crisis in that country.

First, I wish to say how pleased my Government is with the achievements of the process begun in Sodere and Nairobi, but also to reiterate the urgent necessity for the Somali parties that have not yet joined in the process to do so as soon as possible. The Somalis are a great people beset by great troubles, and they deserve a future of peace and prosperity. It is to that great people that the leaders of the various Somali clans and political groups owe their greatest efforts, and it is for that people that they should make peace.

Costa Rica would like to congratulate the countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, as well as Kenya, Ethiopia, Italy and Egypt, for their special efforts to bring the Somali parties to the negotiation table, and we encourage them to continue those efforts. We also believe that the United Nations should follow closely the Somali peace process and support the international actors that are trying to help the parties find a peaceful and negotiated solution that would, among other things, guarantee the stability, unity, integrity and sovereignty of Somalia. In this regard, the United Nations, as suggested by the Secretary-General in his report of 17 February 1997, should support the Sodere process and establish a trust fund to cover the enormous costs entailed in organizing these meetings.

As part of this international effort to support a peaceful solution to the conflict in Somalia, Costa Rica urges all States to respect the arms embargo established in resolution 733 (1992).

We would also like to express our appreciation to all the humanitarian organizations that provide assistance and relief to the people of Somalia at great risk to their own lives. We are concerned that the missions of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization have had security problems recently, and we urge the parties, particularly those in Mogadishu, to provide protection and security to the officials of all international humanitarian organizations.

We are also concerned about the situation of Somali refugees. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), on 27 April the repatriation programme for the Somali refugees in the east of Somalia will resume. This programme initially began on 28 February last. To date, 2,500 refugees in north-west Somalia have been repatriated, and it is hoped that some 10,000 more will be repatriated by the end of May. These refugees will receive food aid for nine months and the equivalent of $30 in local currency. Costa Rica hopes that these repatriation measures will be enough to assure them a better future. We also believe that special attention should be given to Somali refugees in Kenya who left their homes because of the prevailing insecurity in southern Somalia.

In my country's opinion, it is essential to deal with and resolve the humanitarian problems besetting Somalia. In order to provide humanitarian assistance to the Somali people, it is indispensable, among other things, to open the port and airport of Mogadishu, as well as to eliminate the so-called green line, which not only splits the city but also impedes access to and use of the international terminals indispensable for delivering humanitarian assistance. It is a duty of the parties to the conflict to eliminate such obstacles to humanitarian assistance. In this regard, Costa Rica supports the suggestion of the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations Political Office for Somalia and possibly, when conditions permit, to reopen it in Mogadishu.

I would like to conclude by expressing my Government's hope that all parties to the conflict, with the support of the international community, will shoulder their responsibilities in promoting a solution to the crisis and reconciliation in Somalia. This requires openness, tolerance and understanding, and my Government is sure that the various Somali factions will now demonstrate by means of clear actions their readiness for peace and reconciliation. To that end, we support the holding of a National Reconciliation Conference in Bossaso, beginning on 10 June, convened by the National Salvation Council, and we trust that all factions will participate in that meeting.

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): It has been six years since Somali faction leaders overthrew the Government of the dictator Siad Barre and two years since the withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) forces from Somalia, yet the Somalis have still not formed a national government.

The United States believes that the Somali faction leaders themselves must make the difficult decisions required to reach a viable reconciliation process. We have followed and will continue to follow closely events in the Horn of Africa region. We support the efforts of regional leaders, the Organization of African Unity, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the League of Arab States, Italy and others who have tried to facilitate negotiations.

But outsiders cannot bring peace to Somalia. The international community can only assist the efforts of Somalis to reach their own solutions to the crisis and to move towards peace, stability, law, order and national reconciliation. We urge all Somali leaders to end the divisions that keep them from political reconciliation and to work towards a broad-based national government that represents all the Somali people.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): For the first time in many months, the Security Council is having an open debate on the situation in Somalia. Today's meeting is particularly significant because it comes at a time when the people of Somalia are once again attempting to establish dialogue among themselves.

Somalia has travelled a long road. My delegation recalls that in October 1996, the main factions, led by Hussein Aidid, Osman Atto, and Ali Mahdi, meeting in Nairobi, restarted the process of dialogue when they agreed to reopen the ports and committed themselves to establishing a broad-based all-inclusive Government. Unfortunately, that agreement was short lived and hostilities resumed soon after.

In December 1996, 27 political parties, meeting in Sodere, Ethiopia, resolved to establish a National Salvation Council which would form a transitional authority for Somalia. Unfortunately, the 27 parties did not include all the major factions, and as a result the outcome was rejected by the Aidid faction, which refused to join the process.

Other efforts by members of the international community, and particularly the Government of Italy, have sought to add to or complement these efforts. More recently, meetings have been held in Cairo. We welcome all these efforts since they encourage dialogue and political negotiations among the people of Somalia. But they are not enough and serve only as a foundation. We can only remind the leaders of the Somali factions that they themselves will have to resolve the problem of Somalia and that no one else can solve their problem. They therefore must go the extra mile and learn to accommodate and be flexible as they proceed in the difficult task of finding common ground. Any meaningful effort must be all-inclusive to accommodate all parties.

We urge the international community to keep the issue of Somalia on its agenda and to continue to respond to the needs of the people of Somalia even in these difficult times. The United Nations agencies have in particular continued to monitor and respond to humanitarian needs. The need for humanitarian assistance will no doubt remain as long as the political problem remains unsolved. While my delegation calls on the international community to continue to render assistance to Somalia, we at the same time call on the Somali leaders to respect international humanitarian law. There have been many cases in which international personnel have been killed, wounded or subjected to kidnapping or extortion. The lack of security for relief and rehabilitation operations remains an impediment to the delivery of assistance to the populations in need and must be carefully looked into by faction leaders.

As a member of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which has been continuously involved in the search for peace in Somalia, I wish to stress the following points. First, the prospects for peace in Somalia have never been greater and the international community should seize this opportunity to facilitate negotiations and dialogue. Secondly, all efforts aimed at securing peace in Somalia should be complementary and coordinated with the IGAD initiative that is already in place. Thirdly, the planned Bossaso conference should be provided with material and financial support to ensure its success.

We must, all of us together, help the people of Somalia to help themselves. A regional initiative is in place, and we call on the international community to support it. Kenya will continue to do all in its power to assist the people of Somalia in the search for peace.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*interpretation from French*): Since the fall of former President Siad Barre in January 1991, chaos — even anarchy — has reigned in Somalia, leading to the destruction of all political and administrative structures indispensable for the functioning of the State. Deadly clan warfare ravaged the country, one of the world's poorest. An unprecedented famine afflicted a large segment of the population, compelling millions of people to live in subhuman conditions. The international community could not have failed to react. The course of subsequent events is too well known for us to dwell on.

But it is certainly difficult to refer to the present situation in Somalia without recalling the tragedy and painful circumstances that led the United Nations, despite its positive and beneficial work on behalf of the Somali people, to leave the country in 1994. How many pictures of desolation, misery and atrocity still live in our memories! Many, too many, Blue Helmets lost their lives in a mission whose lofty purpose cannot be overemphasized, because it reflected our humanitarian instinct and our moral responsibility to rush to the aid of people in distress. No, we cannot forget.

But it is to the Security Council's honour that it has today devoted an open debate to Somalia, whose people have fallen victim to a situation over which they have no control and do not deserve to be abandoned to their sad fate. Somalia continues to distinguish itself by the existence in its territory of so many political factions and armed groups — clans that refuse to stop fighting and destroying each other in attempt to reign unopposed in a galaxy characterized by a constellation of tribes. Each of the forces that has been formed to overthrow the established regime is seeking to impose its authority. The unbridled power struggle is thus nourished by rivalries among the leaders of various clans and by their unquenchable thirst for political power commensurate with their moral and religious domination of the members of their respective communities.

The leaders of the Somali factions bear complete and inescapable responsibility for the misfortune that has been visited upon their people and the destruction of their country. They must break the cycle of violence they have put in motion and admit without delay that no faction can long impose itself through force, despite the nature and size of the allegiances and alliances it may have. Those who fight today for claims of ethnic supremacy must understand that the future of Somalia depends first and foremost on their capacity to assume their responsibility to ensure the national unity and territorial integrity of their country. A divided country has no future. It is indispensable for the leaders of the Somali factions to show greater interest in the destinies of their people. They should take a careful look at the rest of the world — particularly at the countries and political leaders who have been able to overcome internal conflicts and strife so as to restore social peace and promote national reconciliation. Ethnic pluralism must become the cement to build a strong and unified nation.

The Somali people look to the Security Council today, following with interest and emotion our deliberations. They wait impatiently for hands to reach out and extricate themselves from the vice in which they have been trapped for years. Of course, our television screens no longer confront us with the horrible pictures to which we were accustomed. The international press has left, and no one remains to bear immediate, direct witness. And yet, is it possible not to hear the cries of distress of those who continue to suffer?

In this connection my delegation welcomes the decision of the Secretary-General to reactivate the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, the role of which is vital in the coordination of the international community's assistance. Contacts already established between the representatives of the United Nations and the leaders of the Somali factions must be continued, because they offer an encouraging sign for the re-establishment of the climate of confidence necessary for fruitful cooperation. We support the idea of the Secretary-General's dispatching a Special Envoy on a fact-finding mission to expand our knowledge of the situation. In fact, it would be useful to create a situation that would lead all parties to accept an effective presence in Mogadishu of the United Nations that could give appropriate consideration to the recommendations that the Secretary-General made in his report of last 17 February.

We must also commend the initiatives of the regional leaders, in particular that of President Arap Moi of Kenya. They have long shown strong and determined interest in achieving a solution to the Somalia crisis. The persistent efforts of the Italian Government are praiseworthy because they contribute to a continuation of dialogue and the establishment of a climate of confidence among the Somalis and the rest of the international community. We hope that the recent initiatives undertaken by the Egyptian Government, under the aegis of the League of Arab States, will result in the organization of a framework of cooperation with the participation of all the Somali parties.

The results achieved at the 3 January 1997 meeting in Sodere must be consolidated so as to make possible the convening of a National Reconciliation Conference on an expanded basis in Somali territory.

Certainly no one can take the place of the leaders of the Somali factions in deciding the destiny of their nation and their people. But it is important for us to emphasize the role of the international community in the pursuit and implementation of the objectives of the peace process in Somalia. This role cannot be played effectively unless the embargo on the delivery of weapons is strictly applied, and unless a clear decision to put an end to hostilities is taken by those who are fomenting strife and who persist in warfare. We expect to see a positive attitude from the clan leaders vis-à-vis the humanitarian organizations, for which they have the obligation to ensure both free access to the needy population and security. The reopening of the Mogadishu airport and seaport in this connection is, we think, a prerequisite and a litmus test.

At a time when a part of the country is stricken by drought and a cholera epidemic has joined the already numerous horrors afflicting the population, Somalia needs humanitarian assistance, which should be sent as quickly as possible, without any impediment or restriction. The city of Mogadishu must be reunified in order to make possible a broad and equitable distribution of food and medical supplies.

We, as Africans, are devoted to Somalia and are thus determined to participate in all endeavours to restore peace to that country. We encourage the international community to explore ways and means to set up an appropriate mechanism which would respond to the most urgent needs of the Somali people. That people must not be held responsible for the vile acts committed by the faction leaders. We could never understand their being abandoned or left to fend for themselves, for it is our moral duty to continue to deal with their fate and to try

to mitigate their suffering. We hope that it will be possible to surmount the difficulties of the past, to overcome the effects of the Somali syndrome so as to make it possible for the Somali leaders to be rehabilitated publicly by striving and succeeding in restoring peace and in taking charge of the destiny of their people in a reunified Somalia, for it is their primary responsibility to secure the well-being of their people.

Mr. Wlosowicz (Poland): We wish to thank you, Sir, for your initiative to convene an open debate on Somalia. We are of the view that matters like the one before us today deserve our constant attention and thorough examination. May I add, however, that the Security Council has never been indifferent to the difficult, complex and sensitive situation in Somalia. The open debate last year and regular informal consultations and briefings on this issue best demonstrate this.

During our last open debate on Somalia, my delegation stated that only national reconciliation can bring peace and stability to Somalia, and that it is the responsibility of the leaders of that country to seek dialogue and political solutions instead of hostility and violence. Such an appeal is very much relevant today. And in fact, at least now, it cannot be overstated.

The situation in Somalia has not significantly changed since we last met in this Chamber to consider it. But there are certain developments which might eventually lead to Somali national reconciliation. We welcome the important meetings in Nairobi and Sodere. In our view, they constitute a significant step forward on the road to peace in Somalia. But they have to be followed by concrete deeds. In particular, the solemn declaration adopted on 3 January 1997 by the majority of the Somali factions will have to be put into operation. Speaking realistically, only then will the community of States be able to constructively assist the process of normalization in this nation which has borne so much.

One cannot question the will of the international community to help Somalia. There are many examples of concern and practical help from States. Here one should speak of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and of the Organization of African Unity countries, in particular Ethiopia, Kenya and Egypt. Also, the Government of Italy should be commended for its important contribution.

It is clear to us that the international community will maintain or even increase its level of involvement provided that all — I repeat all — Somali factions, and especially those of Mr. Aidid and Mr. Egal, use the momentum created at the Nairobi, Sodere and Cairo meetings to pursue the common way to national reconciliation.

As we did last year, we would also like to underline that the full observance of the arms embargo under Security Council resolution 733 (1992) is one of the key conditions for durable peace in Somalia.

Lastly, our delegation wishes to express its satisfaction with the Secretary-General's decision to extend for another six months the activities of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, which plays an important and constructive role in the international efforts towards the peaceful resolution of the Somali crisis.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Portugal.

The President of the European Union will address the Council later on in a statement that Portugal fully supports.

When we consider the situation in Somalia, it seems easy — perhaps too easy — to succumb to the notion that the international community can do little more than try to deliver the most essential humanitarian assistance. The recent past cautions us to tread carefully. But we must not underestimate the virtues of persistence. The international community and the United Nations in particular still have means at their disposal with which they could make a relevant contribution to shaping events in Somalia.

Although Somalia is not considered a success story for the United Nations, the truth is that the final chapters have yet to be written. We should not give up and deal with Somalia as if it were a lost cause. Indifference must not prevail over hope. We concur with the Secretary-General when he says in his February report on Somalia

> "that the best hopes for restoring peace to Somalia lie in the negotiation of a political settlement entrusting power to a broad-based Government in which all the principal factions will be represented". *(S/1997/135, para. 51)*

In Africa and elsewhere other experiences show that national reconciliation is possible if and when the main players in a conflict agree on some form of power-sharing. Therefore, Portugal considers that the Nairobi

and the Sodere meetings are very important steps in the right direction, and welcomes the proposal for a National Reconciliation Conference, which is scheduled to take place in Bossaso. We call upon all the directly interested parties to participate in this initiative. Failure to do so will only contribute to prolonging the agony of the Somali people and to delaying the dawn of peace in their country.

As the President of the Security Council stated on 27 February 1997,

> "full responsibility for achieving national reconciliation and for restoring peace rests with the Somali people". *(S/PRST/1997/8)*

This simple and fundamental message should not be forgotten by the leaders of the Somali factions, in particular those who refuse to revitalize the political dialogue in Somalia.

In this context, we must commend all Member States that have contributed to mediation efforts in Somalia, in particular Italy, Kenya, Egypt and Ethiopia. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), the European Union, the League of Arab States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development have also been instrumental in this process, and fully deserve public recognition. Strict coordination of these efforts is required. Unity of both purpose and action is vital if we want to persuade the Somali factions to walk in the right direction.

If a serious political dialogue is re-established among the main Somali factions, we sincerely hope that a national reconciliation package will include the following measures: respect for human rights, and an end to the appalling situation still prevailing in the country; the establishment of, and strict adherence to, the rule of law; the creation of a national army and a national police force; and the promise of elections, whenever feasible, to ensure the primacy of democracy. In our view, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia is also a key element. Indeed, territorial integrity is an indispensable part of national unity.

Ideas have been floated with regard to the creation of a joint United Nations/OAU fact-finding mission to examine what more could be done to help the people of Somalia to restore peace in their country, and on the possible designation of a Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to support the peacemaking efforts of interested regional States. We are open-minded about the latter idea, although a fresh assessment of the situation should be provided. On the former, we agree with the Secretary-General that it is not evident that a joint fact-finding mission would, at this time, add significantly to their efforts.

I would also like to emphasize the importance the Portuguese Government attaches to strict compliance with the embargo imposed by resolution 733 (1992) on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Somalia. The resumption of the political dialogue in Somalia would certainly enable the international community to respond in a positive way to the appeals of the United Nations to ensure continued relief and rehabilitation efforts in Somalia. As the Sodere declaration states,

> "the rebuilding of Somalia is of such a magnitude as to call for massive international aid in support of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction." *(S/1997/135, para. 42)*

The political and economic tasks ahead truly confront the Somali people with a formidable challenge. But their leaders must understand that if they act wisely the results will be too good to miss. Peace will be their reward.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker is the representative of the Netherlands. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Berteling (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. All associated countries — Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia — have aligned themselves with this statement, as has Norway.

A little more than two years ago, a major United Nations peacekeeping operation, the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), was withdrawn from Somalia. Since then, the conflict between the factions has continued. Many more Somalis have fallen victim to the continued violence. Some progress in the area of reconciliation has been achieved recently.

Today's open debate is testimony to the fact that the international community has not forgotten about Somalia, or abandoned that country. The United Nations Political Office for Somalia continues to make efforts to facilitate

a settlement, and United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations try to alleviate the humanitarian situation wherever they can. The European Commission and its Special Envoy, as well as States members of the European Union, continue their relief activities and rehabilitation assistance to stable areas, where the local authorities are prepared to work together with civil society towards peace and reconstruction. The Somalia Aid Coordination Body plays a crucial role in the coordination of all these efforts, and deserves the continued support of the entire international aid community.

The European Union wishes to reiterate its full support for the efforts of regional and other interested States, as well as those of international and regional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the League of Arab States, to promote a direct political dialogue and facilitate a broad-based political settlement in Somalia. We salute in particular the initiatives of Kenya, which facilitated the Nairobi agreement, and of Ethiopia, which led to the establishment in Sodere of the National Salvation Council of Somalia. We would also like to commend the efforts by Italy's Special Envoy for Somalia, Ambassador Cassini, for facilitating the dialogue between some of the main faction leaders.

Unfortunately, the results of these efforts have so far not been altogether inclusive, as in every case one or more important players have refused to participate. This points to the need for coordinating the various regional peace efforts and integrating them into one comprehensive political settlement for Somalia as a whole. We should like to reiterate, however, that the ultimate responsibility for achieving national reconciliation and for restoring peace rests with the Somali people themselves. The European Union therefore calls upon all Somali factions immediately to cease all hostilities, and to cooperate with the efforts for peace and national reconciliation in Somalia. We are encouraged in this regard by the recent meeting of the National Salvation Council and by the establishment of the joint committee on Mogadishu, aimed at reaching a political settlement in Mogadishu that could give impetus to the current momentum for dialogue and compromise.

The response from the international community to the most recent United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Somalia has been limited. The European Union encourages all States to continue to contribute generously to United Nations appeals to ensure continued relief and rehabilitation efforts in Somalia, including those aimed at the strengthening of civil society. We expect the Somali factions, for their part, to refrain from violence, to ensure the safety and freedom of movement of all aid personnel and to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian relief to the Somali people. The latter requires the opening of the airport and harbour of Mogadishu.

Finally, we wish to recall that there is one more way in which Somalia can be helped to solve its problems: by full and scrupulous adherence to the Security Council embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to that country.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Italy. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): Since January 1991, Somalia has been a country without a Government, without laws, without public order or public services, and without any food security. It has become a country in which, alas, life itself has come to be of little value. The country disintegrated before the very eyes of the international community, while a new type of threat to international peace and security was ushered in, a threat to which the United Nations has so far been unable to respond. In fact, a number of missions, in particular the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), were sent to Somalia to restore peace, but to no avail.

In the vacuum left, Somali civil society has struggled to reorganize at the local level on both the ancient and the new foundations of the communities and on the foundation of the hard work and heavy sacrifices of its people, particularly those of women. Luckily, elders have also continued to be a source of legitimate authority. In this regard, I believe that the ingenuity and the resilience of the Somali people deserve to be recognized and appreciated. These qualities do not, however, supplant the need for a unified State with legitimate central authority and a federal system granting local communities broad powers of self-government.

In the dark years, Italy has not wavered in its commitment to the rebirth of Somalia. Through our contribution to the United Nations missions and throughout our two years as a member of this body, we have tried again and again to find workable solutions to the crisis. Above all, we have tried very hard to keep alive the flame of hope for and trust in a better future for Somalia.

Since leaving the Council, we have been pleased to note that it continues to monitor closely the situation in Somalia. Today's debate is a further confirmation of this. We are indeed very grateful to the Council President, Ambassador Monteiro of Portugal, for calling this public meeting. We hope the meeting will be publicized in Somalia through the media and through every other possible means, so that the Somali people may know directly and personally that the international community has not forgotten them and cares about their plight.

Developments in Somalia in recent months seem somewhat more encouraging. As has been said repeatedly around this table, the Nairobi understanding of 15 October, the Sodere agreement of 3 January and the Mogadishu meeting of 20 January testify to the efforts of several countries and also to the renewed focus of the Somali factions on the need for peace. We welcome the constructive involvement of the Organization of African Unity, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the League of Arab States — particularly Egypt — as well as the more active role played by the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) and the contacts its representatives have made with the Somali leaders in Mogadishu. Now more than ever, we believe that all these efforts must be coordinated and intensified.

The National Salvation Council, which was established by the Sodere agreements, met for the first time from 4 to 8 April in Mogadishu. As has already been noted here, unfortunately, not all factions attended the meeting, nor did Hussein Aidid or Egal of Hargeisa. However, the decisions made at that meeting, particularly the one to convene a National Conference, seem to move in the right direction. To be successful, the national conference for which we hope should be comprehensive, fully reflecting the inclusive approach that was the hallmark of the original Sodere agreements.

Nobody can afford to repeat past mistakes and past absences. Unlike previous gatherings, the forthcoming Conference must indeed be attended by all the main faction leaders, as well as by representatives of Somali civil society. It is indeed high time that all sides, particularly the National Salvation Council and Hussein Aidid, took one step back and showed some flexibility so as to reach a pragmatic agreement on a new institutional arrangement.

Some parties are reportedly considering the possibility of constituting another provisional government, even before a comprehensive agreement has been reached. Frankly, this hypothesis raises concern, since the presence of two self-appointed governments with conflicting claims to legitimacy could only increase tensions rather than alleviate them.

In what we consider to be a positive development, the National Salvation Council instead endorsed the contacts under way to pacify Mogadishu and widen the national reconciliation process. Furthermore, we were pleased to learn that for the second time since the 20 January meeting arranged by Ambassador Cassini, Aidid and Ali Mahdi Mohamed met again on 10 April last. More meetings must follow, because the only way to resolve problems is through talks and personal contacts, not through confrontation and, above all, not through continued distrust. Needless to say, Osman Atto must also join in these meetings. In the end, when the story of this period of Somali history is written, these men should be proud to be remembered as peacemakers and not as warmongers.

Italy is working very closely with two neighbours of Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, to make a tripartite mission to Mogadishu in the near future. This is another testimony of goodwill towards the Somali people.

I have referred here mainly to Mogadishu, but, needless to say, similar efforts must also be made in the rest of Somalia, particularly in the areas where an atmosphere of confrontation still prevails.

We now understand that Hussein Aidid and a delegation of the Sodere group are right now travelling to several foreign countries. We sincerely hope that all their interlocutors will impress upon them the need for dialogue, flexibility and compromise.

On another count, Italy remains committed to continuing to do its very best to alleviate the humanitarian plight of the Somali people. There will be a new meeting of the Somalia Aid Coordination Body on 29 and 30 May in Rome to examine the humanitarian assistance needed for Somalia. I would like to recall by way of example that last year Italy contributed approximately $9 million worth of emergency aid to Somalia.

I strongly believe that this meeting will be even more successful if it sends a new and very clear message that the Somali factions — all of them, without exception — must carry on the process of genuine national reconciliation. They must focus on the resurrection and well-being of the entire country as their

ultimate objective. The international community should enhance this process by making appeals, exerting influence and providing all the necessary assistance it can muster. Of course, having said this, we are very much aware, as are many others, that in the final analysis the fate of the Somali people lies in their own hands, in the hands of their leaders and in the willingness of their leaders to look beyond past and present differences and instead look forward to a future of a just peace and peaceful development.

In closing, Italy fully subscribes to the statement just made by the Netherlands in its current capacity as President of the European Union.

The President: I thank the representative of Italy for the warm words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Kuwait. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, Sir, on behalf of the Arab Group, which I have the honour to chair this month, I should like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I should like also to pay tribute to the exceptional wisdom and ability that you have shown in presiding over the deliberations of the Council. In addition, I cannot fail to thank your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Wlosowicz, whose great skill in presiding over the Security Council was witnessed by all those who follow the Council's actions.

We come today before the Council to debate the situation in Somalia, in particular following the developments we have witnessed there at all levels — political, security and humanitarian. I do not believe that I need to speak at length of the grave situation in Somalia and the terrible suffering of its people, beset by a relentless civil war that has serious security and humanitarian repercussions.

That civil war prompted the international community, led by the Security Council, to take steps that we had hoped would put an end to the conflict among warring factions in Somalia. The main objective was first and foremost to alleviate the suffering of the Somali people and to save them from the scourge of a conflict that from the outset had no justification.

The Arab Group, of which Somalia is a member, joins its voice to those of all the States and parties that have repeatedly called for the Security Council to pay continuing attention to, and debate, the situation in Somalia. In this way we, as befits a responsible international community, can defeat the merchants of war and destruction. We can foil their attempts to exploit a fertile land in a conflict whose principal victims are a people whose only fault has been not to find a serious and consistent position from the international community.

The Arab Group therefore welcomes the positive developments on the political level in Somalia, which began with the Nairobi meeting, at which Hussein Aidid joined other factions. Successful Ethiopian mediation led to the meeting between 26 factions on 3 January in Addis Ababa, which culminated in the agreement forming the Somali National Salvation Council and in a pact to continue dialogue with the other Somali factions that were not parties to that agreement.

As a member of the League of Arab States, we are pleased that one of the positive indicators was the participation of the National Salvation Council in a special session of the Council of the League of Arab States, held from 12-14 March of this year. In this context, we must pay tribute to the efforts of the Italian mediator, Mr. Cassini, to intensify consultations among factions leaders so as to promote reconciliation in Mogadishu and reach an agreement on a speedy solution to reopen the capital's airport and port. This in turn would enhance security and stability in Mogadishu. The Arab Group emphasizes the need to make the most of all of these developments in order to bring about the necessary national reconciliation and to create stability.

The Arab States, in their endeavours towards Somalia, proceed from the following principles.

First, Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Secondly, they stress the commitment of the Security Council to a lasting and comprehensive settlement in Somalia.

Thirdly, they call on all Somali factions to cease hostilities forthwith and cooperate with all international and regional efforts aimed at achieving peace and national reconciliation in Somalia.

Fourthly, they encourage States to contribute generously to United Nations appeals to continue emergency assistance and rehabilitation efforts in Somalia.

In this context, I should like to pay tribute to Egypt, Qatar and to my own country, Kuwait, for the financial and in-kind assistance they have provided towards national reconciliation, as well as for their humanitarian assistance and educational support throughout Somalia.

In conclusion, I should like, on behalf of the Arab Group, to appeal to all Somali factions and to the Somali people. We would first urge them to make every effort to convince the international community that they want peace and stability. They can do this only by demonstrating unity and a positive intent towards reconciliation. We also call on the international community to continue its support and assistance to the fraternal Somali people in order to re-establish stability and normalcy in a State that has been torn asunder by savage ambition, which cares little for the dreams of children, their happiness or a people's desire to live in peace and security.

The President: I thank the representative of Kuwait for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Tunisia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): I wish at the outset, Sir, to express our satisfaction at seeing you preside over the Security Council this month. Your great skills and extensive experience ensure that effective work will be accomplished in the area of international peace and security. I should like also to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Zbigniew Wlosowicz of Poland, for his excellent work last month.

The Security Council's consideration today of the situation in Somalia provides us with an opportunity to emphasize the need for an increasingly sustained commitment on the part of the international community to promote the restoration of a lasting peace in that country.

Two agreements were reached among the majority of the Somali factions: the October 1996 Nairobi agreement and the Sodere agreement of 3 January 1997. This is without a doubt one of the promising developments that have recently taken place in Somalia. These agreements show the signatories' awareness and, we sincerely hope their desire to halt the fratricidal war waged by the various factions and to make it possible for Somalia to rejoin the international community.

In this connection, we are pleased that the parties to the Sodere agreement have affirmed their determination

> "to place national interest above selfish clan interests and personal greed and ambition".

This is an encouraging sign that, together with the establishment of a National Salvation Council, opens up real prospects for the rebirth of the Somali State.

In this connection, my delegation wishes to pay a tribute to all regional actors, particularly Egypt, Kenya, Ethiopia and Italy, as well as regional and international organizations and institutions that are working to establish conditions conducive to a settlement of the conflict.

It is essential that such efforts continue and intensify with a view to consolidating achievements. In this connection, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Organization of African Unity emphasized at their recent ministerial meetings the importance of involving all Somali factions in the peace process under way. The factions refrain from any action that could rekindle hostilities and unleash the old demons of confrontation, and they must promote dialogue and the peaceful settlement of their differences.

This would encourage the factions that have as yet not signed the Sodere agreement to do so. Were this to happen, we could then hope that the National Reconciliation Conference envisaged in that agreement would enjoy the participation of all the camps representing the Somali people in order to establish a broad-based Government of national unity.

At another level, mediation and good offices, both regionally and internationally, should be coordinated. In this connection, as the Secretary-General has suggested in his report dated 17 February 1997 on the situation in Somalia, it would be useful to appoint a high-level Special Envoy for the country, whose mission would be to provide liaison among the regional actors and support their mediation efforts.

We believe that the United Nations has a paramount role in the continued mobilization of the international community to create a climate conducive to normalizing the situation in the country. The Security Council has the necessary authority to support those in favour of peace

and persuade reluctant factions to come to terms. The arms embargo decreed in resolution 733 (1992) must be strictly observed by all States.

Regional activities to promote national reconciliation must be supported in various ways by the international community. We fully support the Secretary-General's proposal to set up a trust fund to implement the Nairobi and Sodere declarations.

We would also like to refer to the precarious economic and humanitarian situation of the Somali people at this time. One must emphasize that consolidating progress through national reconciliation requires improving the standard of living of the population. According to the most recent report of the Secretary-General, there may be a nutritional catastrophe if the drought continues in the country.

In this context, the role of the personnel of United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations and humanitarian organizations is helpful in various ways. Working to meet the needs of the people in the best way possible, they continue to carry out their activities in frequently dangerous conditions.

The Somali factions should facilitate the performance of these humanitarian activities and ensure the proper conditions for the reconstruction and economic recovery of the country. For its part, the international community must provide the necessary assistance to consolidate and strengthen the progress that has been made to date in Somalia.

The President: I thank the representative of Tunisia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Ethiopia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mohammed (Ethiopia): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you most warmly, Sir, on your assumption of the high office of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. I wish to thank you in particular for organizing the present debate of the Council on the situation in Somalia, which we hope will be followed by concrete actions in support of the present efforts for peace in that country.

May I also thank your predecessor, His Excellency the Permanent Representative of Poland, for his leadership of the Council last month. I would also like to pay a special tribute to His Excellency Mr. Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the very important and constructive report submitted to the Security Council on the situation in Somalia, contained in document S/1997/135.

The Security Council held its last open meeting on Somalia a little more than a year ago to express concern over the deterioration of the situation in that country at that particular time. Today, although the problem in Somalia is still far from being resolved, this meeting is being held at a time when the prospect of peace seems to be closer and quite promising.

Since the adoption of the Nairobi declaration of 1994, and after more than three years of complete impasse and uncertainty, we have for the first time witnessed in the last six months a promising sign of progress and movement towards peace and national reconciliation in Somalia. This encouraging movement began with the very commendable initiative taken by His Excellency President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya, which, in October of last year brought leaders of the three major Somali groups together in Nairobi.

At the same time, Ethiopia, as mandated by the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), began consultations with all Somali factions with a view to setting in motion direct consultations and negotiations among all Somali political movements and factions. As a result of this initiative by Ethiopia, leaders of 26 Somali political organizations were able to meet for a high-level consultation in Sodere, Ethiopia, and after eight weeks of intensive, frank and responsible negotiations, agreed on a common course of action to resolve the crisis in their country and to put an end to the misery and suffering of their people. The Sodere High-level Consultative Meeting was conducted with commendable seriousness and with a spirit of give and take on the part of the Somali leaders, who put the interests of their nation and the people of Somalia first and high above sectarian and individual interests.

To ensure the success of the Sodere consultations, Ethiopia and the IGAD countries as a whole made all the necessary efforts so that all Somali factions would be represented in the process. To this end, from August to October 1996, as a prelude to the commencement of the High-level Consultative Meeting, a series of consultations were held with the representatives of virtually all Somali

factions. Invitations were extended to all Somali political movements and factions, without exception, to participate in the high-level consultations. In spite of all these efforts, it is indeed regrettable that one of the Somali factions did not participate in the high-level consultations held in Sodere.

Since the very inception of the crisis in Somalia, we have been persistently stressing the fact that the primary responsibility for the solution of the problem in that country lies in the hands of the Somalis themselves, and that the role of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), IGAD, the United Nations and others is to assist and facilitate the efforts of the Somalis. This has also been one of the main guidelines adopted by the member States of IGAD for their efforts for peace in Somalia. The Sodere high-level consultations were initiated and conducted on the basis of this principle.

Acknowledging their responsibility for the future of their country, the Somali leaders undertook, in their Declaration of national pledges and commitments adopted at Sodere on 3 January 1997, to place national objectives over and above clan interest and personal ambition and to work with determination and resoluteness for the revival and renaissance of their nation. To implement these and the other important pledges and commitments, in particular to meet the greater challenge of forming a Central Authority, the Somali political movements established at their Sodere meeting a National Salvation Council, with a mandate to embark on a preparatory course of action that would lead to the establishment of a Transitional Central Authority or Provisional Central Government of Somalia. In pursuing this mandate, the Somali political movements also agreed to convene a National Reconciliation Conference at Bossaso, Somalia, to be followed by a Concluding National Conference to announce the formation of a Transitional Central Authority. We are pleased and encouraged that preparations are currently under way in this direction and that the Somali political movements have agreed, at their recent meeting held in Mogadishu, to convene the National Reconciliation Conference on 10 June 1997, in Bossaso, Somalia.

We are convinced that for peace and national reconciliation to succeed and take firm root in Somalia, it is essential that all concerned parties are brought together and join hands as genuine partners in the ongoing peace process. In this context, the need for the establishment of a broad-based and all-inclusive government in Somalia is one of the guiding principles underlined by the IGAD Heads of State and Government. The Sodere initiative clearly recognizes the need for inclusiveness and sets procedures for the eventual inclusion of all those who might not, for a variety of reasons, have joined the process initially. It is therefore our hope that those who have not joined the Sodere process will do so and come on board. As rightly stated by the Secretary-General in the report before the Council,

> "The onus is now on those who chose not to join in the negotiation of the Nairobi and Sodere declarations. It will be their responsibility if the people of Somalia continue to suffer." *(S/1997/135, para. 51)*

In the past few months, in particular as the result of the recent Sodere agreement, we have witnessed promising prospects for peace and national reconciliation in Somalia. While it should be stressed once again that the solution to the problem in Somalia rests in the hands of its own people and their leaders, the role of the international community in supporting and facilitating these efforts cannot be overemphasized. The Organization of African Unity and the Intergovernmental Authority for Development have been closely following the crisis in Somalia since its outbreak six years ago. The various initiatives, including the recent Nairobi and Sodere initiatives, represent a genuine effort by the regional countries aimed at assisting the Somalis in their endeavours to bring peace and national reconciliation to their country.

We pay tribute to the important efforts that other regional and international organizations and individual Governments, in particular the League of Arab States and the Government of Italy, are making to complement and to assist the ongoing regional peace process.

The role of the United Nations and its Security Council in ensuring the success of the regional effort for peace is particularly important at this critical stage in the evolution of the problem in Somalia. In this regard, we wish to recall that Ethiopia, with a mandate on Somalia from both the OAU and IGAD, and Kenya, as Chairman of IGAD, have submitted a joint proposal to the United Nations, upon the request of the Secretary-General, indicating the areas in which the support of the United Nations would be vital for the success of the regional effort for peace. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for the serious consideration he has given to this joint proposal and for the important observations and suggestions contained in his recent report, which, in our

opinion, should be given serious attention by the Security Council.

In the light of these observations and suggestions, and taking into account the developments in Somalia, we believe the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, should take the following measures. First, as indicated in paragraph 46 of the report of the Secretary-General, the Security Council should call upon all the Somali parties to cooperate with the efforts of OAU and IGAD, and make it clear that the Council will not tolerate any faction's non-cooperation with those who have shown concrete commitment to peace and national reconciliation. Secondly, the United Nations should expand its relief and rehabilitation assistance to Somalia with the clear aim of maintaining and advancing the present momentum for peace and of strengthening the constituencies for peace in the country. Thirdly, to ensure the success of the National Reconciliation Conference, scheduled to take place in Bossaso, Somalia, on 10 June 1997, and to support the regional peace process, the Security Council should request the Secretary-General to establish a trust fund and call upon Member States to contribute to such fund, as is suggested in the Secretary-General's report. Fourthly, the United Nations and its Security Council should emphasize the importance of closer coordination and consultation among those working for peace in Somalia. The new spirit of cooperation and commitment to consultation on the part of the United Nations and others should be welcomed and further enhanced. To this end, proliferation of initiatives needs to be resisted by the United Nations. The role of the Security Council is very crucial in this regard.

We believe the positive developments that have taken place in the last six months indicate that the peace process in Somalia has reached a critical stage. The success of the present efforts for peace depends, first and foremost, on the resolve of the Somali leaders to continue on the path of peace and national reconciliation they have chosen, and to live up to the commitments made under the agreements they accepted. In this regard, we are encouraged, in particular, by the seriousness and the sense of responsibility exhibited by those who participated in the Sodere process and in the subsequent follow-up and further implementation of their commitments under the agreement.

At the same time, it should be stressed clearly that while chances for peace in Somalia seem to be quite promising, one should not underestimate the challenges to success. We strongly believe that the international community in general, and the United Nations in particular, should make a concerted effort to preserve and advance the current momentum for peace and to meet the challenges to it.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate that, for their part, countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development are determined to participate in the efforts for peace in Somalia, and that Ethiopia too will continue to do its utmost in discharging the heavy responsibility, entrusted to it by the regional countries and by the States members of the Organization of African Unity, to assist and to facilitate the search for a lasting solution to the problem in Somalia.

The President: I thank the representative of Ethiopia for the kind words he addressed to me.

There are no further speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.3771

Security Council

Fifty-second Year

Provisional

3771st Meeting

Thursday, 24 April 1997, 1 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Monteiro	(Portugal)
Members:	Chile	Mr. Somavía
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Costa Rica	Ms. Incera
	Egypt	Mr. Aboul-Magd
	France	Mr. Thiebaud
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Cabral
	Japan	Mr. Abe
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Poland	Mr. Wlosowicz
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Choi
	Russian Federation	Mr. Fedotov
	Sweden	Mr. Osvald
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Richmond
	United States of America	Mr. Inderfurth

Agenda

The situation in the Great Lakes region

97-85477 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 1.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Great Lakes region

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council is increasingly alarmed at the deterioration of the situation in Zaire and at the humanitarian consequences this is having on the refugees, displaced persons and other affected civilian inhabitants. It expresses its deep concern at the lack of progress in efforts to bring about a peaceful and negotiated settlement of the conflict in Zaire.

"The Security Council once again underlines the obligation of all concerned to respect the relevant rules of international law, including those of international humanitarian law.

"The Security Council is dismayed by the continued lack of access being afforded by the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire (ADFL) to United Nations and other humanitarian relief agencies, and by the recent acts of violence which have hampered the delivery of humanitarian assistance. It reiterates the statement of its President of 4 April 1997 (S/PRST/1997/19) and in particular calls in the strongest terms upon the ADFL to ensure unrestricted and safe access by all humanitarian relief agencies so as to allow the immediate provision of humanitarian aid to those affected, and to guarantee the safety of humanitarian relief workers, refugees, displaced persons and other affected civilian inhabitants in the areas which the ADFL control.

"The Security Council also expresses its concern at the obstruction of the repatriation plan of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for eastern Zaire. It calls upon the ADFL and the Government of Rwanda to cooperate fully and without delay with UNHCR to enable the early implementation of the plan.

"The Security Council is particularly alarmed by reports of massacres and other serious violations of human rights in eastern Zaire. In this context, it calls upon the ADFL and others concerned in the region to cooperate fully with the recently established United Nations investigative mission by ensuring unimpeded access to all areas and sites under investigation, as well as the security of the members of the mission.

"The Security Council reiterates its full support for the United Nations five-point peace plan, endorsed by its resolution 1097 (1997) of 18 February 1997. It calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities and calls upon the Government of Zaire and the ADFL to engage seriously and fully in the search for a speedy political solution to the problems in Zaire, including transitional arrangements leading to the holding of democratic and free elections with the participation of all parties. In this context, it calls upon the President of Zaire and the leader of the ADFL to meet as soon as possible.

"The Security Council warmly commends the efforts of the joint United Nations/Organization of African Unity (OAU) Special Representative for the Great Lakes region. It calls upon all States, in particular those in the region, to support these efforts and to refrain from any action that would further exacerbate the situation in Zaire.

"The Security Council reaffirms once again the importance of holding an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region under the auspices of the United Nations and the OAU.

"The Security Council expresses its gratitude to the Secretary-General for keeping it informed of developments in the Great Lakes region and requests him to continue to do so on a regular basis.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/1997/22.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.3772

Security Council

Fifty-second Year

Provisional

3772nd Meeting

Friday, 25 April 1997, 12.40 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Monteiro	(Portugal)
Members:	Chile	Mr. Eguiguren
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Costa Rica	Ms. Incera
	Egypt	Mr. Awaad
	France	Mr. Thiebaud
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Cabral
	Japan	Mr. Sato
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Poland	Mr. Wlosowicz
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Choi
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Sweden	Mr. Osvald
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Wilmshurst
	United States of America	Mr. Rosenstock

Agenda

The situation in Croatia

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Prevlaka (S/1997/311)

97-85496 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 12.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Croatia

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Prevlaka (S/1991/311)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Prevlaka, document S/1997/311.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General of 14 April 1997 (S/1997/311) concerning the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka and expresses its disappointment at the general lack of improvement in the situation in Prevlaka.

"The Security Council is concerned by the assessment of the Secretary-General that, while the situation generally has been stable, several developments have led to an increase in tension in the area. The Council is particularly concerned by the descriptions in the report of continuing violations of the demilitarization regime, including movements of heavy weapons and of special police of the Republic of Croatia, and the entry by a navy missile boat of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the demilitarized zone, in disregard of the concerns and requests previously expressed by the Council.

"The Security Council calls upon the parties to refrain from provocative actions of all kinds, to cease violations of the demilitarized zone and to cooperate fully with the United Nations military observers.

"The Security Council also notes the observations in the report of the Secretary-General about the lack of any progress towards adopting the practical options proposed to the parties by the United Nations military observers in May 1996, as referred to in the report of the Secretary-General of 31 December 1996 (S/1996/1075), to improve the safety and security of the area. The Council reiterates its call upon both parties to adopt these practical options with a view to their early implementation, to remove landmines from areas patrolled by the military observers, and to stop their interference with the freedom of movement of the military observers and with the implementation of the mandate of the observers.

"The Security Council calls upon the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to resolve the disputed issue of Prevlaka through bilateral negotiations pursuant to the Agreement on Normalization of Relations, signed by them in Belgrade on 23 August 1996, and in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and good neighbourly relations.

"The Security Council emphasizes its confidence in and support for the work of the United Nations military observers. It expresses its appreciation to the military observers and to the Member States who have provided personnel and other forms of support.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/1997/23.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.